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SHINING UP THE CUP FOR CALGARY

Grey Cup handler Dennis Dowell shines the Cup prior to a team lunch with the Calgary Stampeders on Thursday in Vancouver. The Stampeders will play against the Hamilton Tiger Cats on Sunday in the 102nd CFL Grey Cup. For coverage, see pages 56 to 59. PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Calgary looking at 'smart' streetlights

Next-gen devices.
Tech upgrade could expand well beyond LED technology

JEREMY NOLAIS
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As crews work over the next decade to convert Calgary's 90,000 streetlights to LED technology, the city's road boss says it's a good time to evaluate adding "$10 cameras" that could detect everything from traffic levels to temperature and pollen levels.

The devices could also be used as a beacon for personnel responding to an emergency and could detect instantly whether a pole has been hit and knocked offline.

"You could have intelligent streetlight technology, so you can understand where things are happening in your system," said city roads director Troy McLeod. "It's a really good time to test this smart technology and see if it makes sense for us."

Quoted

"It's a really good time to test this smart technology and see if it makes sense for us."
City roads director Troy McLeod

McLeod said the height of streetlights gives them an ideal vantage point for detection systems. He wasn't aware of cities where "smart" streetlight devices have been installed but has been reading about U.S. cities eyeing similar technology.

The cameras could detect traffic backups and feed that information back to the city's traffic-signal timing system, which could then address intervals to clear the road.

The temperature information they could provide would be useful for city snow-removal crews and may even hold appeal to larger weather organizations curious about the micro-climates existing within Calgary, McLeod said.

The lights can also be programmed to flash, providing a signal to police, EMS and fire responding to an emergency. They can even read the level of allergens in the air and could allow the city to issue advisories to those residents sensitive to such things.

For McLeod's department, specifically, keeping the light grid intact may be among the most beneficial uses. At any given time, there are a few hundred streetlights out in the city, McLeod said.

"If you had, say, a pole hit, there would be a motion sensor attached that would say it's moved more than a metre," he said.

The city has only retrofitted a few hundred streetlights to date, doing away with high-pressure sodium bulbs in favour of more energy-efficient LED ones. Converting the 90,000 streetlights citywide will likely take another four years or more and come with a total price tag of up to $35 million. But there are built-in cost savings over the long-term, as the bulbs require less maintenance, McLeod said.

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NEWS 1

Mission.
Three men charged in bank robbery

Police say three men charged with robbery made a "dynamic" entrance into a Mission-area bank, advising employees: "This is a robbery."

At around 5 p.m. Wednesday, police were called to the 2300 block of 4th Street S.W. for reports of a robbery. Officers cordoned off a large area around the bank amid fears the robbers were armed.

"We had no idea how many suspects there were," said Sgt. Dave Louie. "We did not want a hostage situation, so that's why before we entered, we wanted to make sure there was no one else in the bank."

Police said the attempted robbery was planned and the culprits were equipped to pull off a heist. Staff inside the bank, meanwhile, were locked inside a room during the robbery; some were bound with zip ties.

"After the suspects fled the bank, the CPS had constant communication with the bank employees before we entered," Louie said.

He said three men fled the scene but were tracked down and arrested without incident. One of the suspects was reportedly carrying a CO2 pellet gun. Money was also found, but how much was taken is still under investigation.

Lucas Wayne Windsor, 21, Saleem Obaid Nasery, 21, and Matthew Alexi Valdes, 23, all face numerous charges. Police said the investigation is ongoing and won't say whether the suspects were known to them.

The trio are set to appear in court Friday. HELEN PIKE/METRO

A cyclist rides on newly painted bike lanes along Bowness Road N.W. in October. The budget for a program dedicated to future bike lanes and other cycling and pedestrian infrastructure over the next four years was cut by 15 per cent this week. ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO FILE

2017-18 'Active Modes' cuts could be felt sooner

Future budgets.
Program aimed at improving pedestrian and cyclist mobility

ROBSON FLETCHER
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When council decided this week to cut $2 million from a fund to build traffic-calming devices and bike lanes in the budgets for 2017 and 2018, it was explained as a cost-saving measure for the future.

"It's not going to impact what happens in 2015 or 2016," said Coun. Andre Chabot, the architect of the spending cut, referring to the immediate effect on the city's tax rate.

But the practical impacts of the cut could actually be felt as early as next year, according to Tom Thivener, the city's cycling co-ordinator.

"We're planning two or three years ahead, so we count on these funds being there to help implement the improvements that the community has asked for," Thivener said Thursday.

The reduction, which amounts to about 15 per cent of the budget for the City Wide Active Modes Program over the next four years, will have implications when it comes to the construction of new bike lanes and pathway connections, as well for the installation of bike signals at busier intersections.

"They all could potentially be affected by the cut," Thivener said. "We'll have to see if we can find the funds elsewhere or we'll have to look at cutting back on some of the projects."

In addition to cycling-specific infrastructure, Thivener said about $500,000 a year is directed toward traffic-calming measures, based on community requests.

"Because there's more requests than we can actually do, we have a system where we vet the projects ... before awarding which project moves forward," he said.

In October, there were about 30 to 40 requests on the consideration list, Joe Olson of the city's transportation planning department told Metro at the time.

In 2014, the city installed speed humps in five new locations and curb extensions in one location as traffic-calming measures.

Impact

"Essentially this is our pot of funds to implement our bike plan."

Calgary cycling co-ordinator Tom Thivener on the cuts to the City Wide Active Modes Program

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Calgary hospital testing patient for 'very low' risk of Ebola virus

Results. Officials expect test findings for isolated female patient over the next few days

ROBSON FLETCHER
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A female patient from one of the three West African nations primarily affected by Ebola has been isolated in a Calgary hospital and is being tested for the virus, although health officials say the chances she actually has been infected are "extremely low."

"Due to this individual's travel and symptom history, we are testing this individual for several diseases, including the Ebola virus," Dr. Richard Musto, medical officer of health for the Calgary Zone, told reporters Thursday.

"The risk of this patient having Ebola is very low," he added. "Testing is being conducted out of an abundance of caution."

Test results should be available "within the next few days," Musto said.

The patient initially arrived at the Peter Lougheed Centre Wednesday but staff decided to transfer her to South Health Campus, where Musto said she was taken directly to an isolation room.

He said she is from one of the three countries where the Ebola outbreak has been the most severe — Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone — but wouldn't specify which one.

"This individual had no known exposure so the risk is extremely low that this individual would have Ebola," Musto said.

South Health Campus is the designated site for any potential Ebola cases in southern Alberta. Staff members there have run through a series of exercises to prepare for the possibility of such an event.

Musto said it would be "unacceptable to suggest that the public should be fearful" as a result of these precautions. He said this is the third patient in Alberta to be "queried" for Ebola so far.

"Be assured that we are prepared to manage any potential case of Ebola," he said. "Our staff are trained to protect health. Our staff have protected health. The patient is not a risk to the public."

To date, there have been no confirmed cases of Ebola in Canada and federal health officials have described the risk presented to Canadians from the disease as "very low."

Quoted

"Be assured that we are prepared to manage any potential case of Ebola."

Dr. Richard Musto, medical officer of health for the Calgary Zone

Dr. Richard Musto, medical officer of health for the Calgary Zone, spoke with reporters about an individual in isolation at the South Health Campus. ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO

Council approves budgets, nixes performance targets

Calgary police Chief Rick Hanson METRO FILE PHOTO

City council approved the police operating and capital budgets Thursday — including a planned increase of just 10 more officers over the next four years, but narrowly rejected the service's performance-measure targets.

By a 7-6 vote (Councillors. Joe Magliocca and Jim Stevenson were absent, as both are in Vancouver for the Grey Cup), council instructed police Chief Rick Hanson to come back with more specific targets.

Coun. Ward Sutherland said the performance goals need to be more quantitative, as many simply stated, "improve," without specifying by how much.

Mayor Naheed Nenshi said it's a matter of, "you get what you measure."

"Business plans only work if performance measures are in place," he said. "In the case of the police service, the measurements were just not firm enough."

Council approved the other aspects of the police plan for 2015-2018, including an addition of only 10 more officers next year and none in the following three years, despite a projected population growth of 100,000 people.

Hanson said the force is increasingly using technology to become "extremely efficient" and previous crime-prevention initiatives are now paying dividends in lower crime rates.

Police call volumes have continued to increase and Hanson expects the calls will continue to grow with the population.

He said more officers will be deployed to suburban areas where the most growth has occurred and the service will closely watch response times across the city.

He anticipates there will be enough police to meet Calgary's needs at leastthrough 2016. ROBSON FLETCHER/METRO

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Prentice's support for GSAs not enough, say LGBTQ advocates

Premier's plan.
Province to amend Bill of Rights, offer legal avenue for students

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Premier Jim Prentice proposed changes Thursday to the Alberta Bill of Rights to prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and also pledged to establish new legal avenues for students wishing to start a gay-straight alliance (GSA).

But supporters of Bill 202 — the brainchild of Alberta Liberal Laurie Blakeman, which would require school boards to allow the establishment of GSAs if there was interest in doing so among students — said the measures advocated by Prentice aren't enough.

"My impression is that's a field goal but not a touchdown," said Kris Wells, co-director of the Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services at the University of Alberta.

Wells credited Prentice for suggesting that sexual orientation will be removed from the list of school discussion topics requiring parent consent but questioned a second measure that would give students wishing to start a GSA "clear legal recourse" if a school attempts to stand in their way.

Pam Krause, president and chief executive of the Calgary Sexual Health Centre, said she's glad talk of supporting LGBTQ students has taken centre-stage in the Alberta Legislature but believes more could be done to promote safe and caring school environments.
COURTESY CALGARY SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE

Pam Krause, president and chief executive of Calgary Sexual Health Centre, also raised concerns about the process. She noted that many students forming GSAs are pre-teens and questioned if they really would have the knowledge — and patience — to challenge a ruling against their group.

"You'd have to have someone else supporting you to even figure out how to even do that," she said.

Both Calgary and Edmonton's public-school boards have recently said they actively support GSAs and provided figures suggesting, collectively, 45 such groups are active in their schools.

Alberta Education Minister Gordon Dirks has recently asked every school board in the province how many GSAs are active under their purview.

Metro has asked repeatedly in recent days for the data but hasn't been provided with a clear response on whether it will ever be publicized.

Dirks did say in a statement provided this week that the data his ministry collected was "only a small piece of information to help inform policies in this area."

"I continue to support local autonomy of schools and school boards to provide initiatives and programs that support their students and local communities," the minister added.

Prentice, meanwhile, took shots at the Liberal bill during a news conference Thursday.

"Certainly I think people are being pitted against one another and I fundamentally disagree with that," the premier said.

Blakeman said, however, she had no intention of dividing anybody, adding Prentice's announcement didn't do much for her cause.

"We still don't have GSAs that will be accommodated.... Nothing has changed in that situation," she said.

Prentice, meanwhile, also proposed a package of "tough and thorough anti-bullying provisions" that he said would take effect in time for the 2015-16 school year.

WITH FILES FROM RYAN TUMILTY/METRO

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2014. Lower prices, no big power outages: AESO

The organization that oversees Alberta's electricity says wind power and a new natural-gas plant helped meet growing demand this year at a lower price to consumers.

The Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO) says the increased supply of power also meant no major outages.

But with the province's burgeoning population and economy, what about next year?

Miranda Keating Erickson, AESO's vice-president of operations, said 2015 could be much the same.

"We have been breaking records every year in terms of electricity use. I would be shocked if we don't break a record again this winter," she said Thursday.

"Next year, as I look forward, looks an awful lot like this year in terms of lots of supply, continued demand growth," Erickson said.

The Conference Board of Canada is forecasting Alberta's economy to grow by 3.3 per cent in 2015.

Erickson said AESO added more than 1,400 megawatts of new power generation to the system in 2014 — more than 2012 and 2013 combined.

Demand this year was up by 3.5 per cent, mainly due to swelling cities and more energy-sector development.

Two projects are credited with contributing to what she called the extraordinary increase in supply.

They include the Shepard Energy Centre natural-gas power plant in Calgary and the Blackspring Ridge wind farm near Lethbridge.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Other projects coming

Blackspring is the largest wind farm in Canada, AESO says. When it's fully operational next year, Shepard will be Alberta's largest natural-gas-fired power facility.

- Other projects are to come on stream in 2015, Erickson said.

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IN DEFENCE OF
Mike Morrison
calgary@metronews.ca

Gay-straight alliances

So what happens should a teenager in Alberta want to start a GSA? Well, if it meets any sort of resistance, they'll have to go up against a board of elected officials.

Writing about politics isn't too much fun.

People online can be mean and, quite frankly, I don't have thick enough skin to deal with it. It makes you wonder how kids these days do it. After all, the Internet can be a hateful place.

As adults, we have mechanisms for dealing with it — take a box of red wine, for example. But kids, well, they don't have much. Especially kids who are being relentlessly teased about their sexual orientation. According to the Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey, half of LGBT youth have thought about suicide, and they are over four times more likely to attempt suicide than their non-LGBT peers.

So, how does a kid deal with bullying? University of British Columbia researchers say Canadian schools with anti-homophobia interventions such as gay-straight alliances (GSAs) may reduce the odds of suicidal thoughts and attempts among both sexual minorities and straight students.

But don't ask Alberta's kids, because very few of them know the benefits of such a group.

Last week, Liberal MLA Laurie Blakeman put forward Bill 202, the Safe and Inclusive Schools Statues Amendment Act. It basically forces schools to create GSAs, should a student request one. It was similar to Motion 503, which the PCs and Wildrose party voted down in April. This bill was different, however, because it included the abolition of the homophobic Section 11.1 of Bill 44.

Then earlier this week, Prentice announced that his party would have a free vote, meaning he would allow MLAs to vote however they wanted. Then on Thursday, when he likely realized Bill 202 might pass, he squashed it by announcing his own legislation.

Well, sort of.

He said legislation was coming, although it sounded like he hadn't even seen it yet. Section 11.1 is going away. (Not really, it's just being moved.) GSAs will be allowed, but only if school boards individually allow them.

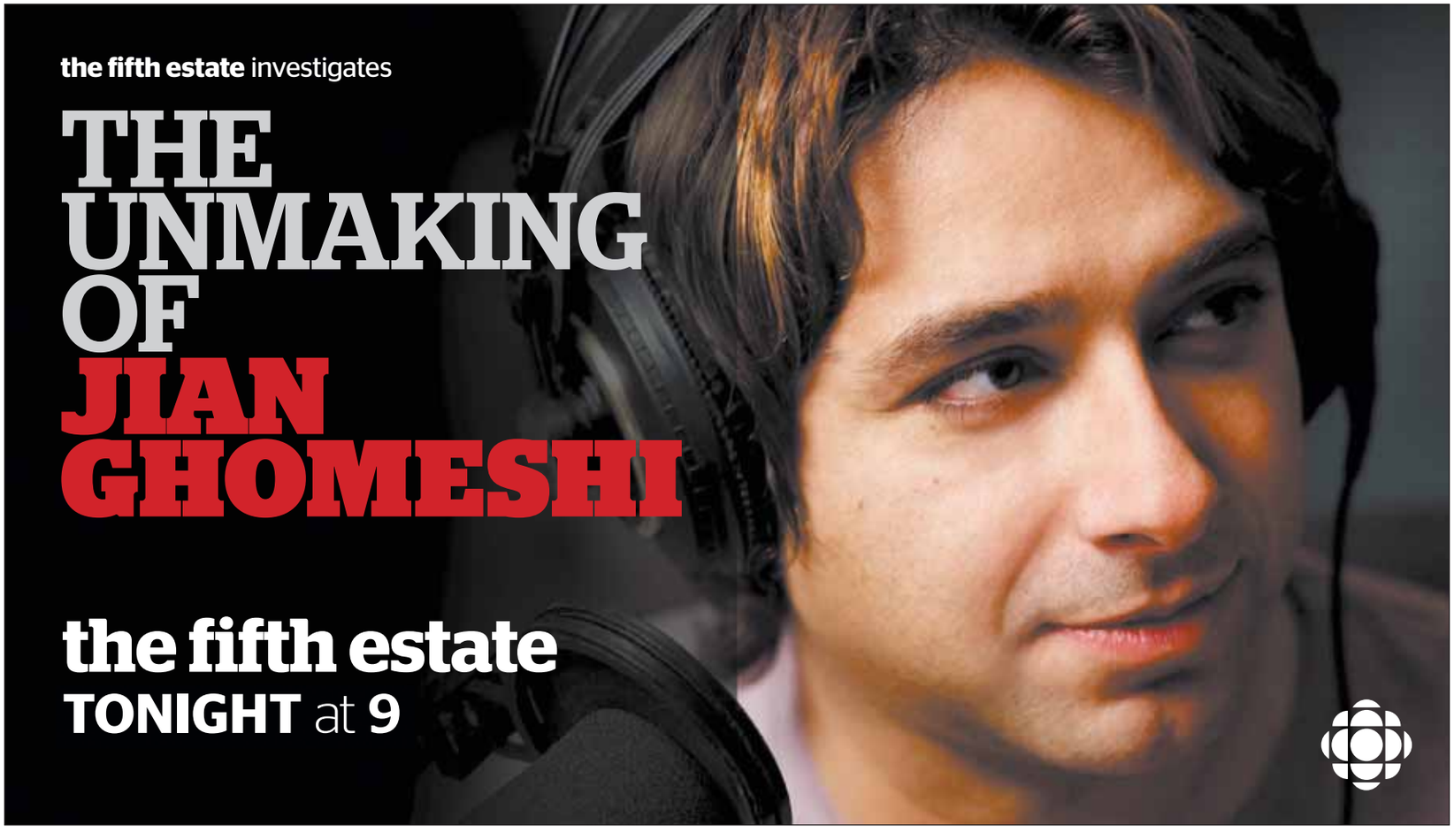
So what happens should a teenager in Alberta want to start a GSA? Well, if it meets any sort of resistance, they'll have to go up against a board of elected officials.

Think about it. When you were 12 years old, could you stand up in front of adults to defend and explain gay rights? I couldn't. But that's what Prentice said will have to happen. During Thursday's press conference, he said, "It's their responsibility."

What I need the premier, along with PC and Wildrose MLAs, to stop doing is saying they support equality when their actions say they don't. When you table and support homophobic legislation, as well as vote down pro-equality motions, you're not supporting all Albertans. You're supporting a very small group of Albertans. If you don't think every Albertan is equal, then your opinion should hold no weight. Luckily for that crowd, Jim Prentice is our premier.

At the end of the day, we only get one shot at this thing called life. And, religious or not, we all get judged at some point, whether it's in heaven or by our friends, family and peers. Our MLAs have the chance to do something meaningful with their positions of power. They have the chance to fix so many wrongs.

To them, I plead on behalf of anyone ever made to feel less than equal: please don't waste it.



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Apology. Ex-soldier says he didn't intend to attack office

A former Canadian soldier who has admitted planning an attack on the Calgary office of Veterans Affairs says he's sorry and never intended to follow through.

Glen Gieschen had a beef with the department over coverage for illnesses he believed were caused by a flu shot.

The 45-year-old former military intelligence officer, whose name was originally banned from publication, pleaded guilty earlier this month to possession of a firearm, possession of a prohibited weapon and possession of a weapon.

Police recovered firearms, body armour, possible bomb-making materials, schematics of the downtown skyscraper and a plan to attack the seventh-floor offices of Veterans Affairs during his arrest last January.

"He sincerely apologizes to all staff of Veterans Affairs Canada for any distress the release of the attack scenario has caused them or their families. This document was never meant to be released to the public," said lawyer Tonii Roulston, reading a statement on behalf of her client.

Quoted

"He sincerely apologizes to all staff of Veterans Affairs Canada for any distress the release of the attack scenario has caused them or their families."

Statement from Glen Gieschen, read by his lawyer Tonii Roulston

"Mr. Gieschen acknowledges it was irresponsible of him to generate or keep such a document."

She said he is facing the repercussions for what he did.

"He has taken responsibility for his actions and has agreed to pay the consequences and he has entered a guilty plea. He'll be incarcerated and will have a lifetime firearms ban imposed," she said.

Gieschen will be sentenced Jan. 30. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Drug-impaired drivers still tough to nab: Cops

Federal review. Force hopes tech will be ready for use come 2016

JEREMY NOLAIS
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City police say the rollout of a new Breathalyzer for alcohol impairment has been smooth but are still hoping the feds will approve a companion device to help them smoke out stoned drivers.

Last year, law enforcement around the province transitioned away from the Intoxylizer 5000C, which was developed in the 1980s, to the Intox EC/IR II. The latter device provides the same level of accuracy when it comes to measuring blood-alcohol level and is a tad more user-friendly, according to Sgt. Rick Butler.

"It's worked very well; we've had no issues to speak of," he said.

But police have conceded that nabbing drivers under the influence of drugs remains a challenge. Currently, they turn to screening courtesy of one of five trained drug-recognition experts (DREs) on the service. Two years ago, the service had 20 members capable of performing such an evaluation.

This year, police have charged just three people with drug-impaired driving but say more could have faced charges for refusing to comply with a screening.

"We've been through a number of different challenges with that (DRE) program, and the next challenge is to bring in some type of instrumentation that will help us detect the drug-impaired driver because, until this point, we've been relying solely on an officer's observations," Butler said.

Police lump crashes where drug impairment was a factor in with those involving alcohol

By the numbers

520

By October's end there had been 520 crashes involving drug and/or alcohol impairment in Calgary in 2014

— to the end of October, there had been 520 such incidents in 2014. In another 274 cases, at least one motorist had consumed an impairing substance but didn't exceed levels mandated in the Criminal Code of Canada.

Butler said his understanding is a federal RCMP review of multiple drug-screening devices may not be completed until late 2015, and then a recommendation would be submitted to federal justice representatives.

The hope is to have a drug-detecting device on Calgary streets come 2016, he said.

"Put it this way: as soon as one is recommended, I'm sure there's going to be a major purchase of them," Butler added. Butler said the advancement of technology would purely "assist" the DRE program, not replace it.

At least one veteran researcher with the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuses, however, has warned that the drug-impairment devices currently only test for the "main players," such as pot, cocaine and opiates and, even then, they're not completely reliable.

Terry Hughes, president of the Calgary chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, said drug impairment behind the wheel is the No. 1 item on the radar of his group's national executives.

"It's a concern that, first of all, the public think they can get away with it and get through the cracks," he said. "It's definitely an area where we're lobbying locally, provincially and federally for better tools for the officers."

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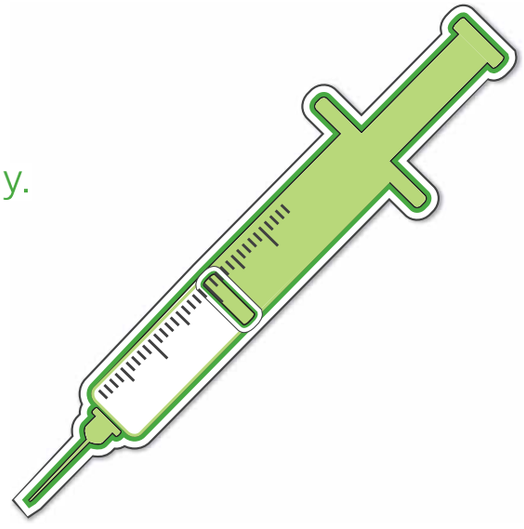

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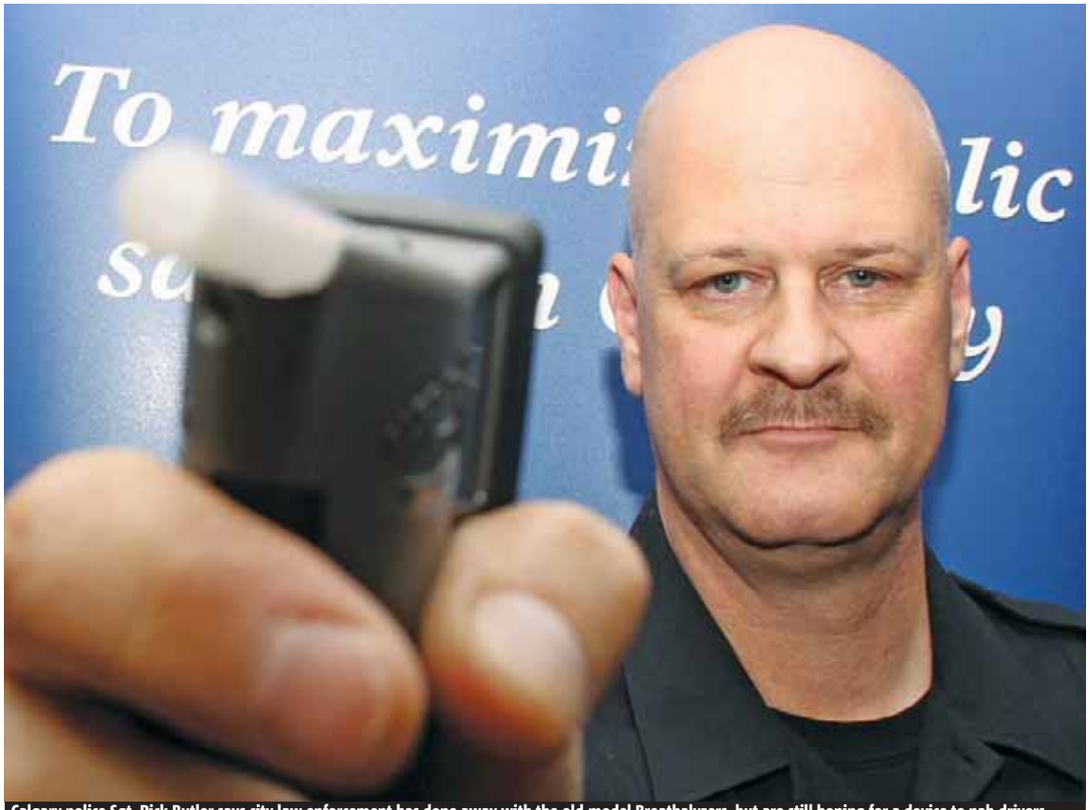

Calgary police Sgt. Rick Butler says city law enforcement has done away with the old-model Breathalyzers, but are still hoping for a device to nab drivers under the influence of drugs. METRO FILE

Stolen? Police seeking owners of seized saddles

RCMP in southern Alberta are trying to find the owners of property seized during the arrest of two suspected saddle rustlers.

The Mounties have released pictures of six saddles that may have been stolen in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

One of the saddles has markings similar to a cattle brand, and some of the others have distinctive leather work.

Police seized the saddles last month during a raid on a chop shop in a rural area east of Calgary.

Other property seized in the raid included vehicles and farm equipment valued at $250,000.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Two charged

Richard Ferber of Black Diamond, Alta., and Harris Parent of Calgary face stolen-property charges.

Snowy, slippery highway

Alberta highway-patrol officer injured in crash

A highway-patrol officer has been injured in a collision during heavy snowfall in central Alberta.

Mounties say the provincial sheriff was checking on motorists involved in another crash along Highway 2 and was struck by an out-of-control semi truck. The officer was taken to hospital by ambulance. The RCMP hasn't released any information on the officer's condition.

Snowfall and travel warnings have been issued throughout the province.

Police say Highway 2, the main road linking Edmonton and Calgary, is especially slippery, and blowing snow has caused poor visibility.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Winter boarders hit paved slopes

Longboarders. Community gets creative when the snow starts to hit the ground and the temperatures drop

HELEN PIKE
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From left to right: longboarders Josh Wutzke, Brennan Abildt and Anna O'Neill bundle up to roll down a parkade in Calgary. HELEN PIKE/METRO

Longboarders do what they can to keep the wheels rolling through Calgary's drawn-out winters, but you won't catch them on the streets.

With no indoor park in sight, the community has come up with creative space solutions that sometimes land them in trouble.

Anna O'Neill, a sponsored boarder who works at Royal Board Shop and has been riding for 10 years, said it's tough to find a patch of pavement to practise on when the snow hits.

In the summer, hills are a longboarder's domain, but come a cold snap those stretches are often blanketed and unusable.

"It's really hard living in Calgary, having months on end where you're not able to skate," O'Neill said. "It gets pretty cold here, so you have to be pretty dedicated to still go out."

When the snow and cold hits is when groups of boarders hit city parkades after hours.

"It's almost as if it's a playground for longboarding," she said. "We don't have a longboard park in Calgary set up.... It's the closest thing to it."

O'Neill said they're respectful of the space — but are prepared to run from the property at a moment's notice. Security guards are always on the lookout for boarders borrowing pavement, she said.

The Calgary Parking Authority (CPA) doesn't permit skateboarding or longboarding in any of their parkades. It's a policy both for the safety of customers and the riders themselves.

Adrian Mrdeza, public-relations adviser for the CPA, said it hasn't been an issue yet for them, but if people skate on parkade pavement, security will ask them to leave.

But winter boarding isn't always just for fun; sometimes it gets competitive. Brandon Bean organizes a number of parkade races in Calgary throughout the winter. He uses Facebook, gives riders a few weeks' notice, checks the weather and collects gear to give away as prizes.

"It's this crazy thing we do in the middle of the winter, basically," he said. Sometimes upward of 30 skaters show up in extreme cold weather — sometimes from as far away as Edmonton — just for a chance to hit the slopes of a dry parkade.

"Everyone's got this itch, I guess you could say."

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Testing. Don't be quick to ditch PATs: Wildrose critic

Alberta's opposition education critic says the province needs to do a double-take before "abandoning" controversial provincial achievement tests (PATs).

"It was knee-jerk; it was an overreaction," said Wildrose member Bruce McAllister. "I'm not sure it serves our kids well. At the beginning of the day, you need to know we have continuity and accountability in the system — it's for our kids and it's for the system."

On Wednesday, McAllister questioned whether Education Minister Gordon Dirks was attempting to cover up "poor performance" by doing away with the PATs.

A new report from the Calgary Board of Education did show dips in results on the end-of-year tests written by Grade 6 and 9 students, and a superintendent said such marks were down around the province.

The province has advocated a shift to computerized tests, known as Student Learning Assessments (SLAs), written at the start of the year by Grade 3, 6 and 9 students.

Bruce McAllister
METRO FILE

But the head of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) has deemed an initial trial of the tests with Grade 3 students this fall an "absolute mess," claiming students were confused by the exams, the technology required to write them was lacking and that it added hours of work for teachers.

The ATA, however, has maintained it supports the SLAs in principle because they provide more information for teachers. The PATs have also been used by the Fraser Institute to compare schools, a process that has long been criticized by teachers.

Liberal education critic Kent Hehr said SLAs are the way to go.

"We believe that teachers are the best judge of a student's capabilities and his or her competence and understanding," he said. JEREMY NOLAIS/METRO

Letter. YWCA adds its two cents on secondary suites

The Calgary secondary-suites debate is still rolling this week as the YWCA added its two cents with a letter to Mayor Naheed Nenshi and members of city council.

Last week the mayor addressed council's failure to move toward legalizing suites at a press conference, calling it "criminal."

The letter from Sue Tomney, CEO at the Calgary YWCA, said that on Nov. 25, more than 200 women and children spent the night under one of their emergency shelter housing programs. These places support women in crisis due to family violence or homelessness.

"Suites are an affordable rental option," she writes. "For women who have experienced violence or for women who may be living alone, the addition of another person in the building can contribute to a greater sense of safety."

As it stands, secondary suites are strictly regulated and zoned. HELEN PIKE/METRO

A child skates on an outdoor rink in this image from a past Enmax Rinklighter brochure. CONTRIBUTED

Enmax ends Rinklighter, begins appliance rebates

Electricity. Initiative triples the amount of money made available to Calgary community associations, the city-owned company says

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For the first winter in 15 years, Calgary community associations won't be eligible for a rebate on the cost of illuminating ice surfaces, as Enmax has discontinued its long-running Rinklighter program in the city.

The program is still in effect in Edmonton and Red Deer for one more year, but they will be retired in those cities as well at the end of this skating season.

In its place, Enmax spokesperson Doris Woodcock said the company will be launching a new program to support community associations with the purchase of new electrical appliances.

"We're transitioning it to something that community centres will be able to benefit from on a year-round basis, as opposed to just a few months of the year," she said of the new initiative, dubbed the Energizing Spaces Fund.

Woodcock said Enmax will commit $75,000 to the fund in Calgary next year — three times the amount it offered through Rinklighter.

The program will be piloted in Calgary initially and "in all likelihood" expanded to other parts of Alberta in the future, she said.

Elaine Scobie, president of the Edgemont Community Association, said the Rinklighter program had been a welcome bonus to her community centre's finances, saving about $120 on the rink's $1,000 electricity bill last year.

"There are community associations that are harder up than ours, but it still frees up money that we can put directly into rink maintenance or other projects," she said. "We never waste any money when it becomes available."

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Buying in

After shopping, try giving back on Giving Tuesday

Black Friday and Cyber Monday are two days that are good for our economy, and now different organizations across the city are hoping Calgarians will help create a day that is good for the community.

Giving Tuesday, which will take place on Dec. 2, is an initiative that allows Calgarians to think about giving back to charities this holiday season.

Different companies and charities were involved with the campaign last year, including the Boys and Girls Club of Calgary. Carolyn Luhning, manager of communications with the club, said last year the organization was just testing the waters.

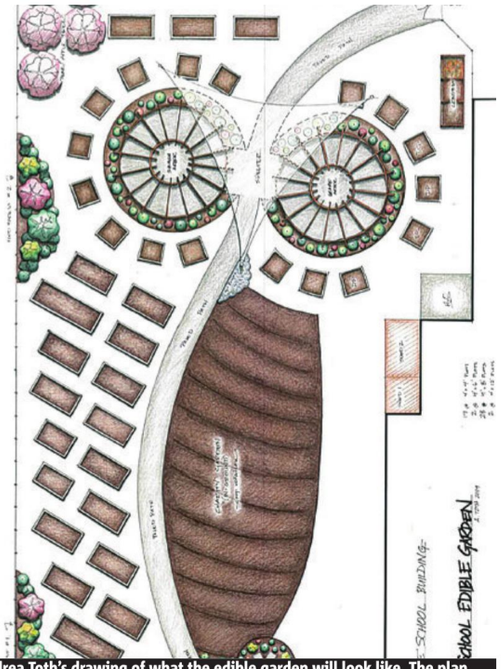
"We could see then that this was an awesome opportunity to come together with like-minded companies and other charities," Luhning said. "This year we're excited to jump in feet-first, and be a part of it in a wrapped-up way."

Last year was the first time Canadians were able to participate in the campaign, and according to statistics from CanadaHelps, one of the two organizations that brought the movement to Canada, Albertans are the most generous people in the country.

"We all know that Canadians are very generous," said Marina Glogovac, president and CEO of CanadaHelps. "But we also know that lots of Canadians still do not give."

Many new organizations have been added to Calgary's list this year, including Place2Give, Kidsport Calgary and Hospice Calgary. For more information about the Giving Tuesday campaign, visit givingtuesday.ca.

YASMIN JASWAL/FOR METRO



Andrea Toth's drawing of what the edible garden will look like. The plan lays out in the shape of an owl from above. CONTRIBUTED

School may plant edible garden

Altadore School. Project dubbed The Owl's Nest Too will extend an existing garden at the school

HELEN PIKE
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Kids getting their hands dirty and moving towards a more ecological world — that's what a collection of family, school and community members hopes will come from their idea to create an edible garden to help children learn from the ground up.

Altadore School's administration and parent council dreamt up an ambitious "one of a kind" project that will see kids learning to garden, the surrounding community helping with crops and food that will be donated to charity. Now all they need is funding.

"If we can teach (kids) how to care for themselves and the earth at the same time they're going to be ahead of the game," said Andrea Toth. "You can't learn (it) out of a book, you have to do it." Toth has a daughter at the school who has been digging around since she was a baby; she's also a member of the Calgary Horticultural Society and she's leading the Edible Garden Committee.

The project, also known as The Owl's Nest Too, is an expansion on a current garden located at Altadore School. It will turn part of the schoolyard that's typically unused into an edible garden that will benefit both the school and community. It's a 11,600-square-foot plot and with all the frills is expected to cost more than $100,000.

Toth said an opportunity to compete for the Aviva Community Fund just "fell into" the school's lap, and she thinks with support they can snag a chunk of the money up for grabs. Principal Alex McKay said he hasn't seen community and school work together at this level before. The garden, though still in a high-level planning stage, has high ambitions.

"I haven't seen anything like this ever done in a school that's that kind of partnership between community and school," McKay said. The school's project has made it to the semifinals; votes can be cast beginning Dec. 1 until Dec. 10. Visit avivacommunityfund.org/ideas/acf22028 to cast a vote.

Quoted

"I haven't seen anything like this ever done in a school that's that kind of partnership between community and school."

Altadore School principal Alex McKay

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Trustee says ‘starter school’ wouldn’t meet needs of students she represents

New approach needed. Calgary and Edmonton public boards request full facilities ASAP

JEREMY NOLAIS
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Starter schools won’t suffice in Calgary’s rapidly growing suburban communities, says one public-school trustee.

Amber Stewart’s comments came one day after Calgary Board of Education (CBE) officials revealed that they’ve asked Alberta Education to skip erecting modular-based starter schools in four communities and proceed straight to full builds.

Among the communities set for a starter school is the bustling Cranston area, which Stewart, trustee for Wards 12 an 14, represents.

“Simply put, a mini-school does not meet the needs of that growing community,” Stewart said Thursday.

“I would say that any school that doesn’t have a learning commons and a gymnasium doesn’t fully meet the needs of our students and does not create an optimal learning environment,” she added.

The province hasn’t said whether the modular schools will feature gyms, but a leading developer says they don’t have a working prototype to meet that need, and a rapidly developed gym for a temporary school to house flood-displaced students in Calgary’s Elbow Park area cost $1 million.

In late September, Alberta Education announced the four schools as well as eight modulars for the existing Westgate school at a total cost of $30.6 million.

Since then, the province has pledged additional funding for design work on permanent schools in the starter-school communities, but CBE officials say their understanding is the dollars for full build-outs haven’t been committed.

In an interview with Metro at the Alberta Legislature on Thursday, Education Minister Gordon Dirks said he was reviewing the CBE’s request to forgo the starter schools as well as a similar ask by Edmonton’s public school board.

“Obviously they have or are making their own second assessments on what might be best in their particular jurisdiction, and we consider those on a proposal-by-proposal basis,” he said.

Quoted

“Simply put, a mini-school does not meet the needs of that growing community.”

Public-school trustee Amber Stewart, on Wards 12 and 14, which she represents

A modular built by Modus Structures is depicted in this file photo. The company has vouched for the “starter school” approach and said it could develop such facilities by combining a number of modulars like this one. METRO FILE

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Safer highway group launches online map

Spotlighting danger. Marks fatalities on Highway 63, 881

RYAN TUMILTY
ryan.tumilty@metronews.ca

Advocates for safer highways in northern Alberta have launched an interactive map that brings people into the heart of the carnage.

The coalition for a Safer Highway 63 and 881 launched the new interactive map online on Thursday, which they hope will spotlight the dangers of the road. According to the group's stats, there have been 183 fatalities on the two highways between 2003 and 2014.

The map allows users to drive along both highways and come across each fatality on the road, with information about the cause of each collision.

Debbie Hammond, the group's executive director, said the map is a way to bring the problems on the road close to home.

"We felt that there was enough passion behind this whole concept so that everyone could experience it," she said.

Hammond said they wanted to highlight that if people avoid distraction and focus on the road, they would be safer.

"It really brings to life that people are dying on these highways and that doesn't have to happen," she said.

Hammond said, especially as winter sets in, it's important for people to make the right decision, put their phones away, drive sober and stay focused on the road.

The interactive map allows drivers to see where accidents along Highway 63 have happened over the last decade. SCREENSHOT

Alberta. Child advocate reviews assault on baby

Alberta's children's advocate says life would probably have been different for a baby assaulted by a caregiver had there been better sharing of her medical and family information.

Del Graff also says in a report that there should have been greater assessment of risk factors in the child's case, so social workers could have apprehended her sooner.

The girl, almost 10 months old, was taken to hospital in 2012 with an unknown injury to her genitals.

A doctor had flagged potential child abuse, but she was sent home with her mother since her father — who had a history of domestic abuse — was not living in the house.

The child was admitted to hospital twice more in the days that followed with a head injury and broken bones.

Police later charged an occasional male caregiver, who had previously faced criminal charges, but social workers didn't know about him. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Imagery in film. Smoking not so PG: U of A group

Sex, violence and tobacco? Students are leading the charge against smoking in movies, asking policy makers to give films an "R" rating when it comes to lighting up.

Partnering with researchers from the University of Alberta and anti-smoking advocates, the Tobacco Rated R campaign was created after new data revealed one-third of youth smoking in Alberta could be attributed to smoking imagery in youth-rated films.

According to Kelly West, lead researcher for the project, 7,252 Alberta youth started smoking because of what they saw on the big screen in G, PG and PG-14 rated movies.

"When you watch movies, you don't even really realize how much smoking really is in them," she said. "You have these characters in movies and they're really glamorous and they're shown as strong, independent, sexy and smoking."

West partnered with Campaign for a Smoke-Free Alberta to lobby Alberta Film Classification unit to give all youth-rated movies containing scenes of smoking an R-rating.

Grade 12 student Brooklyn Trimble said she's seen first-hand how teens are influenced by movies, thanks to a part-time gig as a movie theatre attendant.

"When we have kids movies and I see kids come out after, they're always acting like either the superhero or the main character or whatever character hit home with them," she said.

"If any of those characters were smoking, that's going to have an impact on them."

Trimble said she'd like R ratings to be doled out for movies with smoking, as if it were extreme violence or bad language.

"(Smoking) has more of a chance of harming a child," she said.

So far, the campaign has submitted a brief to the Minister of Culture and Tourism, requesting he consider their efforts since the Alberta Film Classification unit reports to his office. LEAH HOLOIDAY/METRO

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Media magnate enters race for PQ leadership

Parti Québécois. Pierre Karl Péladeau said that if elected, he would be willing to put his shares in Quebecor in a trust

Categorically stating that achieving Quebec independence is his only political goal, media magnate Pierre Karl Péladeau announced Thursday he will seek the leadership of the Parti Québécois.

Péladeau confirmed what people had long been expecting when a university student asked him after a speech whether he was going to take the plunge.

When another student asked him what could motivate a rich man like him to want to become PQ leader, he repeated the dramatic phrase that marked his entry into politics last spring: "To make Quebec a country."

The one difference this time was the absence of any fist-pump to accompany the declaration.

The gesture and the words were widely considered to have a negative impact on the Parti Québécois just days into the election campaign.

The stunning move forced the PQ to address an issue it normally avoids come election time.

Later on Thursday, Péladeau made his way to PQ headquarters, where he was again grilled by reporters. Asked what his main theme will be during the leadership campaign, he replied without hesitation: "Sovereignty."

Polls have suggested the controlling shareholder of Quebecor Inc. would be the front-runner in the race to succeed Pauline Marois as leader.

Péladeau said that, if elected leader, he will spend the next few years explaining what he considers the benefits of sovereignty to Quebecers.

The man, known in Quebec simply as PKP, has been criticized in some quarters for refusing to sell his shares in Quebecor, whose extensive media holdings include the TVA television network, Le Journal de Montreal and the Vidéotron cable company.

He repeated on Thursday he would be willing to put his shares in a trust if he becomes PQ leader. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"I think it's clear that I've committed to achieving Quebec sovereignty. It is my objective, my only objective."

Pierre Karl Péladeau, who is running in the leadership race for Parti Québécois

Pierre Karl Peladeau holds up his nomination papers to run for the leadership of the Parti Québécois in Montreal on Thursday. GRAHAM HUGHES/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Fighting Ebola virus

Military medical team heading to Sierra Leone

Canadian military medical specialists are getting ready to deploy to the epicentre of the fight against the deadly Ebola virus, and the federal government is encouraging private health care workers to join them.

Teams of military medical specialists will be deployed to Sierra Leone for two months at a time over a six-month period beginning at the end of December.

The government says up to 40 Canadian Armed Forces health-care and support staff will deploy to the West African country at any given time.

The military doctors, nurses, medics and others will work alongside military medics from the United Kingdom at the Kerry Town Treatment Unit. Their task will be to treat local and international health care workers who have been exposed to the Ebola virus — but not the local population. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Pot ads must follow rules

Federal guidelines. Licensed producers told they can't make treatment claims, promise cures in ads

Health Canada has ordered the country's medical marijuana growers to stop advertising their products with treatment claims and promotional images.

The federal department issued letters this week to licensed pot producers, warning them to overhaul their advertising and marketing content on websites and social media by Jan. 12.

Health Canada says failure to comply could lead to suspension or revocation of the company's commercial licence. Letters were sent to 20 of Canada's 22 licensed growers, spelling out what each company needs to change to comply with rules governing advertising.

Those rules prohibit companies from advertising "any food, drug, cosmetic or device to the general public as a treatment, preventative or cure for any of the diseases, disorders or abnormal physical states."

Health Canada says producers should provide the brand name, proper or common name of the strain, price per gram, cannabinoid content, and the company's contact details.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Producers of medical marijuana must limit ads to basic information, federal guidelines say. ROBERT F. BUKATY/THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Fake cash. Canada's laws not for U.S. benefit: Feds

The federal industry minister is dismissing the United States' request that Canada's proposed anti-counterfeiting laws also help keep fakes out of their country.

The laws are for Canadians, James Moore told a Senate committee Thursday.

"The idea Canada would act as a customs agent for the United States is, frankly, not something that's on the table," Moore said.

"The scope of this is protecting Canadians and the Canadian domestic market."

Bill C-8, the Combating Counterfeit Products Act, is aimed at stopping the estimated $38 million worth of fake goods flowing into the Canadian market every year by beefing up the powers border agents have to stop them, among other things.

But the law only allows them to stop parcels intended for sale or distribution in Canada — not those just passing through.

That's what has the U.S. upset.

It was one of the first things raised by United States Ambassador Bruce Heyman, when he took up his post this past spring.

"Given our highly integrated supply and production chain, a dangerously substandard counterfeit airliner part or car airbag in either of our countries is a threat to the citizens of both," said Heyman during his first public speech in Canada in June, according to published remarks.

"We therefore believe it is in the best interest of the U.S. and Canada to expand this legislation to include in-transit goods.

"We should have laws and procedures stopping these illegal goods at our shared perimeter."

A spokesman from the embassy wasn't available for comment Thursday as the embassy was closed for American Thanksgiving.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"The scope of this is protecting Canadians and the Canadian domestic market."

James Moore, Industry Minister

Pardon applications

Board struggles with backlog

Almost 7,000 outstanding pardon applications are in limbo as the Parole Board of Canada struggles to clear a backlog created when the Conservative government changed the rules in 2010.

The parole board has announced it is currently focusing its efforts on pardons for lesser summary convictions rather than more serious indictable offences.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Magnotta trial

Accused's actions called 'organized'

A Crown witness says evidence at Luka Rocco Magnotta's trial suggests his actions after Jun Lin's slaying in May 2012 were highly organized, inconsistent with schizophrenia. Dr. Gilles Chamberland testified that Magnotta, over a 48-hour span, dismembered and disposed of Lin's body, emptied his apartment and prepared for a trip to Europe.

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Quebec trial lawyer to fill vacancy on Supreme Court

An experienced Quebec trial lawyer has been appointed to fill a vacancy on the bench of the Supreme Court of Canada.

Suzanne Cote, who has been a member of the Quebec bar since 1981, is the first woman from private practice to be directly appointed to the Supreme Court.

She is head of the Montreal litigation group at law firm Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP.

"With her wealth of legal knowledge and decades of experience, Ms. Cote will be a tremendous benefit to this important Canadian institution," Prime Minister Stephen Harper said in a statement.

Suzanne Cote's appointment will take effect on Dec. 1.
JACQUES BOISSINOT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

"Her appointment is the result of broad consultations with prominent members of the Quebec legal community, and we believe she will be a valued addition to Canada's highest court."

Earlier this year, the Supreme Court rejected Harper's pick of Marc Nadon to join the high court's justices, saying he didn't meet its eligibility criteria.

The elevation of Nadon from the Federal Court of Appeal was ruled invalid in March on the grounds it violated Quebec-specific provisions of the Supreme Court Act.

Cote's appointment to the nine-member bench will take effect Dec. 1.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

New Brunswick gets a snow day

A pedestrian walks through the snow in Moncton, N.B., Thursday after a major winter storm buried parts of the province under more than 30 centimetres of snow, knocking out power for more than 40,000 customers. Schools and government offices in parts of the province were closed due to the weather.

ANDREW VAUGHAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Judge drops charges against protesters

Contempt charges. Kinder Morgan used wrong GPS co-ordinates in seeking injunction on pipeline in B.C.

A B.C. Supreme Court judge has dropped civil contempt charges against dozens of protesters who were arrested at an anti-pipeline protest near Vancouver.

The order came Thursday after Kinder Morgan acknowledged it had used incorrect GPS co-ordinates when it sought an injunction related to its Trans Mountain pipeline.

More than 100 people have been arrested on Burnaby Mountain, including Grand Chief Stewart Phillip of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, who crossed a police line around a Kinder Morgan work site earlier Thursday.

Nearly all of the arrested protesters were charged with civil contempt for violating the injunction, but the judge handling the case suggested during Thursday's hearing that the errors in the initial court order put those charges in doubt.

"What's happened thus far is that apparently people have been arrested on the basis of an order that refers to some other piece of property," Judge Austin Cullen said, prompting laughs and jeers from the courtroom's crowded public gallery.

The order doesn't apply to a small handful of protesters who faced criminal charges for assault or obstruction of justice.

Kinder Morgan is conducting drilling at two sites on Burnaby Mountain as it prepares for the federal approval process. The company's preferred route for the expanded Trans Mountain pipeline would tunnel through the mountain. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Kabul's upscale district attacked

Taliban responsible.
Comes hours after suicide car-bomber struck British embassy vehicle

Taliban fighters staged an attack Thursday evening in an upscale district in the Afghan capital, Kabul. Witnesses described multiple explosions and bursts of gunfire in the Wazir Akbar Khan district, which contains numerous foreign embassies and compounds housing international agencies and companies — as well as the homes of some senior Afghan government officials.

The attack came hours after a suicide car-bomber struck a British embassy vehicle, killing five people, including a British citizen.

Kabul Police Chief Gen. Mohammad Zahir said there were three explosions followed by extended gunfire.

A Taliban spokesman said the intended target was a guesthouse in the district occupied by foreigners.

The spokesman, speaking on condition of anonymity, refused to give further details, adding only that the target of the attack was "enemies."

Afghan police flooded into the area and locked down the surrounding streets. Footage from area security cameras showed heavily armed security forces and armoured vehicles deploying in large numbers.

The attack took place near the compound of the development agency International Relief and Development.

The agency's head of security, Tony Haslem, told The Associated Press the attack lasted about 45 minutes and he heard rocket-propelled grenades and automatic weapons being fired.

Deputy Interior Minister Mohammad Ayoub Salangi confirmed that the target of the attack was a guesthouse in the diplomatic area. He said no foreigners had been killed.

"One Nepalese guard was wounded," Salangi said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Diplomatic targets rare

Thursday's suicide bomb attack is the first on a diplomatic target in Kabul for some time, as most embassies are secured behind high concrete blast walls with razor wire and guards with automatic weapons.

Refugee boy gives thanks in Greece

A young boy holds a paper just after disembarking from a crippled freighter carrying hundreds of refugees trying to migrate to Europe, at the coastal Cretan port of Ierapetra, Greece, on Thursday. The ship, whose 750 passengers are mostly Syrians, including children, women and elderly men, suffered engine failure on Tuesday, 70 nautical miles off Ierapetra. The migrants will be given temporary shelter at an Ierapetra indoor basketball stadium.

PETROS GIANNAKOURIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ferguson

Protesters pause for Thanksgiving

Protesters in Ferguson, Mo., pressed "pause" Thursday as the city welcomed Thanksgiving, decorating boarded-up storefronts with some Dr. Seuss inspiration and gathering for church services - a stark contrast to previous days of outrage over the grand jury decision in the Michael Brown case.

Neither police nor the Missouri National Guard stood sentry outside the Ferguson police station, which has been a nexus for protesters since Monday night's announcement that Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson, who is white, wouldn't be indicted for fatally shooting the unarmed black 18-year-old in August.

On that downtown street, beneath a lighted "Season's Greetings" garland, three children used paintbrushes to decorate plywood covering many storefront windows that was put up to foil potential vandals. One quoted from "The Lorax" by Dr. Seuss: "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better, it's not."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Genetic testing: Knowledge doesn't always mean power

When reporter Jessica Smith Cross learned a Silicon Valley genetics-testing service, 23andme, is now offering Canadians a $199 mail-in test, she was curious: How much could she learn from her DNA and how much should she learn? Today, she decides whether she wants to know if she has the gene linked to Alzheimer's.

JESSICA SMITH CROSS
Metro in Toronto

It's all in your genes

- This is the last in a three-part series in which reporter Jessica Smith Cross — who took 23andme's new mail-in genetic spit test — delves into the implications of increasingly easy testing in the complicated legal and ethical Canadian landscape.
- Read the whole package at metronews.ca

Metro's Jessica Smith Cross checks the 23andme website. Smith Cross was eager to learn about her predisposition to wet ear wax and about how fast she metabolizes coffee (slowly), but it was a tough decision for her to learn whether she had the genetic variant linked to Alzheimer's. METRO

Standing in my kitchen, cooking tacos, my hands shaky, something in me snapped.

That afternoon I'd opened my results from 23andme, a Silicon Valley company that recently has begun offering a new mail-in DNA-testing kit for medical information in Canada.

The analysis of my genes said a lot about me: that I'm predisposed to have wet rather than dry earwax, have muscles built for sprinting rather than marathons and metabolize coffee slowly. I have none of the genes for major recessive disorders such as cystic fibrosis that could pose a risk to a future child. I do have the faulty genes that cause hemochromatosis, a condition where the body absorbs too much iron, and though I should talk to a doctor, I'll be OK.

But the one result I did not check — and that 23andme.com keeps behind a separate digital wall, forcing you to think twice — is whether or not I have the variant of the APOE gene that determines my risk for Alzheimer's disease.

I have a family history of dementia. For weeks, waiting for the results to be processed, I had been obsessing over whether or not to look at the results. Going to sleep at night, waking up in the morning, tuning out conversations with others, my mind kept returning to the question: do I want to know?

Rarely a Smith family dinner goes by without someone making a dark joke about the day they'll lose their mind. Would learning I have a low or normal risk ease my fears? Would a high risk change my life?

Is there any statistic — any percentage chance — of ending up alone in my own mind, disconnected by dementia from everyone I love, that I could accept? And what will my results, good or bad, say about my parents? The answer was something I couldn't unlearn.

In the weeks leading up to that afternoon, I decided: No. Not at 30. Not for a disease that had no prevention or cure. I did not want to know.

But now, standing in the kitchen while my husband sat at the computer making jokes about my earwax results, I was struck: only knowing would quiet the questions.

In the spotlight

Genetic testing was thrown into the spotlight last year when actress Angelina Jolie announced to the world via The New York Times that she has a "faulty" BRCA1 gene, which gives her an 87 per cent chance of developing breast cancer and a 50 per cent chance of ovarian cancer. So she had a preventative double mastectomy.

"I choose not to keep my story private because there are many women who do not know that they might be living under the shadow of cancer," she wrote in The Times. "It is my hope that they, too, will be able to get gene tested, and that if they have a high risk they, too, will know that they have strong options."

Dr. Steven Narod, director of the familial breast-cancer research unit and Women's College Research Institute, is a co-discoverer of the BRCA gene.

Narod advocates that all women with Jewish ancestry, which puts them at risk for the most common BRCA mutations, should get tested and learn of their options regarding preventive action.

But he is critical of 23andme for offering this test result for Alzheimer's.

"Do you want to test for dementia? Well, do you?" Narod asked me in a phone interview, unaware that I had been obsessing over this very question. "Why do I want to know I'm going to be demented in 10 years?"

"The 23andme philosophy — and it's a philosophy, not a science — is that people should be entitled to know the results of these tests even if there was no good to come from it, even if there's no utility," he said.

"Even if there was no preventive action to take. I don't believe that."

Narod said he believes widespread direct-to-consumer BRCA testing is a good idea but he won't advocate testing other genes. Genetic testing should be limited to situations where the patient is actually at risk of the condition they're being testing for and, if they have the genetic predisposition, there is something that can be done about it.

The moment of truth

23andme locks the BRCA and APOE test results, which means that before customers are given their results they are presented with extra information about those genes and must confirm another level of consent to receive the information. They have the option of leaving it locked.

But I knew that I couldn't. The questions were too much.

With my husband standing beside me — ready to pick up the pieces — I clicked on my results.

And I burst out laughing. One of those long, dark, "you have got to be f–ing kidding me" laughs.

My results were a "no call."

That means the first test 23andme did on my APOE gene got only a partial result. According to 23andme, the two genetic markers the company uses to determine Alzheimer's risk are harder to distinguish than most.

The partial results aren't good. Sparing the details, it means that neither copy of my APOE gene has the relatively rare good variant that is protective against Alzheimer's. I have either the average or the bad — or one of each — and I still don't know which.

I emailed 23andme and asked what could be done, and a nice customer-service person emailed back and offered to run the test again, if I wanted. And emailed again, asking what I wanted. And again. And again, to say they were closing this customer-service file because they haven't heard back from me.

They won't, I think. Because I really don't want to know.

APOE gene

23andme tests customers for variants of the APOE gene linked to Alzheimer's disease. People have two copies of the APOE gene, and each is either E2, E3 or E4.

- The E4 variant raises the risk of Alzheimer's. Having one copy of the E4 is relatively common and slightly raises the risk, while having two copies is much less common and significantly raises the risk.
- For example, two per cent of Caucasians have two E4 variants, giving them a 51 to 68 per cent of getting Alzheimer's, compared to the average risk of 10 to 17 per cent, according to studies cited by 23andme.

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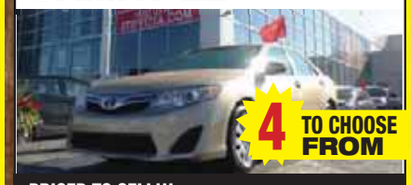

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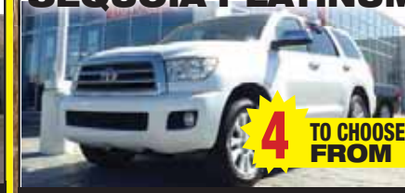

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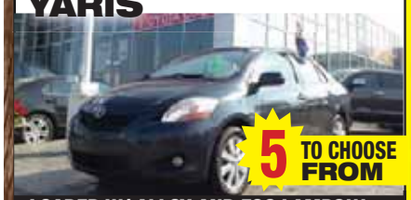

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Ukraine's president wants justice reform

Petro Poroshenko.
Could prepare nation for EU membership

Ukraine's president set out a strongly reformist agenda during the inaugural session of parliament Thursday, calling for the immediate overhaul of a justice system he said was corrupted from the top down.

Petro Poroshenko said a successful reform program would enable Ukraine to consider applying for European Union membership within five years.

Combatting corruption and re-orienting Ukraine toward Europe, and away from Russia, have been dominant themes of national politics since former President Viktor Yanukovych was ousted in February after months of protest.

Since a vote last month that ushered in a raft of pro-Western parties, Yanukovych's Party of Regions is no longer represented in parliament, although some of his erstwhile allies were elected within the Opposition Bloc.

Poroshenko said the justice system's shortcomings posed a national security risk.

Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko.
EFREM LUKATSKY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"It is quite clear that the primary reason for the low standard of life of the majority of Ukrainians is the totally corrupted government apparatus," he said.

A preliminary governing coalition was formed last week, uniting five parties intent on guiding Ukraine toward integration with Europe and potentially NATO.

Poroshenko said Ukraine should shed prohibitions forbidding it from joining military blocs such as NATO. "The non-aligned status voted for in 2010 has not been able and will not be able to guarantee the security and territorial unity of our country," he said.

The new parliament draws together a colorful variety of political figures, including crusading anti-corruption campaigners, commanders of paramilitary units fighting Russian-backed separatists in the east, and remnants of Yanukovych's entourage.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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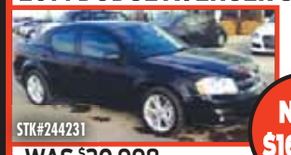
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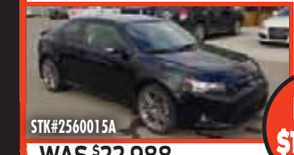
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Exhausted by turmoil, Egypt awaits verdict in dictator's trial

900 dead. Changing political scene now downplays criticism of Mubarak regime

Amal Shaker's 25-year-old son Ahmed was fatally shot in the back on the "Friday of Rage," one of the bloodiest days of Egypt's 2011 uprising against longtime autocrat Hosni Mubarak. Nearly four years later, she is still waiting for justice.

"We want blood for blood," she said.

Her wait is supposed to end Saturday when a verdict is expected in the 86-year-old Mubarak's trial on charges connected to the killing of more than 900 protesters against his rule. But Egypt's "trial of the century," initially watched with excitement, has largely dropped from public attention. That's partly because of how drawn out the process has been — with a trial and retrial — and partly because subsequent upheaval has flipped the political narrative.

The revolutionary fervour of 2011 has been largely extinguished, replaced among many Egyptians by exhaustion from nearly four years of turmoil. Many of the pro-democracy activists central to the uprising are in prison for attempting to protest against the new president, former army chief Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi.

"The issue is over," Ahmed Hani, a Cairo accountant, said of the trial, which he, like many, is not following closely. "What's important is to improve the country, to bring it back to its prior state, more than to take an interest in a thing like this."

When the trial began in 2011, Egyptians were initially transfixed by TV images of the former strongman, who ruled for 30 years being rolled on a gurney into the defendant's cage. In June 2012, he was convicted of failing to stop the killing of protesters and was sentenced to life in prison. But the conviction was thrown out by a higher court, and a retrial began in May 2013.

Mubarak's elected successor, Islamist Mohammed Morsi, was ousted by el-Sissi and the military after massive protests that began on June 30, 2013, against the domination of Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood. A sweeping crackdown against Islamists ensued and has widened to suppress any dissenting voices.

Now the state routinely blames all violence on Islamists and foreign conspirators. TV stations and newspapers have largely dropped criticism of Mubarak's old regime and focus all their venom on Islamists. They also at times promote a revised history, painting the 2011 uprising as part of a conspiracy to destabilize Egypt that the 2013 "revolution" corrected.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A verdict is expected on Saturday in Hosni Mubarak's trial on charges connected to the killings of more than 900 protesters against his rule.

AHMED OMAR/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Timeline

- **1981.** Vice-president Mubarak succeeds assassinated Anwar Sadat as president of Egypt
- **1987, 1993, 1999, 2005.** President Mubarak re-elected. 2005 election widely criticized as fraudulent
- **2011.** Popular protests of "Arab Spring." Protesters killed. Mubarak resigns
- **2012.** Mohammed Morsi, first democratically elected president in Egyptian history, assumes office
- **2012.** Military coup overthrows Morsi, applauded by anti-Muslim Brotherhood protests

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U of Calgary

Study: Canada too generous to R&D

Canada needs to rethink its approach to research and development subsidies, according to a new paper by the University of Calgary's School of Public Policy.

The study, issued Thursday, argues that tax breaks for R&D performed by small firms are high by international standards and that it's likely the cost to taxpayers outweighs the benefit.

While it can be common for governments to boast about how generous they are when it comes to R&D, co-author John Lester questions whether that's something to be proud of without qualification.

"It shouldn't be cause for celebration, it should be cause for reflection," he said in an interview.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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1 in 3 Canadians shopping online for holidays: Survey

Shoppers rush into a Best Buy store in Kansas for holiday shopping deals last year. In Canada, a growing number of shoppers are avoiding the crazy crowds altogether by doing their holiday shopping online, says a survey. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Far from the madding crowds. More of us than ever plan to do all of our gift-buying on the web, says a new survey

A growing number of Canadians plan to do all of their holiday shopping online this year to avoid stepping foot in maddening malls, suggests a new survey commissioned by Google.

About one in three Canadians polled online by Ipsos Reid said they would rely on e-commerce to purchase all their gifts, which was up 50 per cent compared to the results of a similar survey conducted last year.

Still, a majority of the Canadians said that while they would be doing some gift-buying research online, they would ultimately brave the crowds.

"Consumers, rather than wandering up and down on the high street or through malls, are much more purposeful now when they're making those purchase decisions. They're doing their research online prior to going into the malls and they know what they want," said Rafe Petkovic of Google Canada.

Another recent poll conducted for MasterCard Canada yielded somewhat similar results, with almost one in three Canadians saying they planned to do half or more of their holiday shopping online.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Online sales

6.7%

MasterCard estimates e-commerce now represents about 6.7 per cent of total retail sales in Canada.

Hacking. CBC, NHL among the websites hit

A group of politically motivated hackers operating under the name the Syrian Electronic Army briefly defaced the websites of the CBC, the NHL and a number of other prominent news outlets on Thursday.

On Thursday morning, the group posted an image to its Twitter account suggesting that it had hacked the technology company Gigya, which sells social-media log-in technology that companies can integrate into their websites.

"Happy thanks giving, hope you didn't miss us! The press: Please don't pretend #ISIS are civilians," tweeted the group, which supports Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, referring to the militant group also known as ISIL (the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant).

Some visitors to CBCnews.ca and other websites saw a pop-up message that said, "You've been hacked by the Syrian Electronic Army."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Oliver tries to quell fears over oil prices

Despite widespread concern over possible fallout from the dramatic slide in oil prices, federal finance minister Joe Oliver gave assurances Thursday that Ottawa had already factored lower oil prices into its fiscal forecasts.

"When we took into account the oil price decline, which had already occurred, we made the assumption that the prices would stay at the low level for the entire period," Oliver told a media availability conference on Thursday.

Oliver said that's "a relatively conservative assumption, and we'll continue to monitor the level of prices."

The finance minister's comments were delivered shortly before the OPEC oil cartel announced it would maintain production at current levels despite the oil glut on world markets that has contributed to a more than 30 per cent drop in prices from $105 US a barrel last summer.

American markets were closed for U.S. Thanksgiving on Thursday, but in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange benchmark West Texas Intermediate, crude had tumbled $4.64 to a 4-1/2-year low of $69.05 a barrel. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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VOICES

THE OTHER F WORD

THE KOHLER REPORT
By Rebecca Kohler

Ghomeshi's living with his mom. Cosby Show reruns have been pulled (no complaints here). Pick-up artist Julien Blanc can't get into Harrod's.

What a time we're living in! Powerful men are being held to ... reasonable standards.

It's like a huge dam made of foreskin has been broken, making way for a flood of estrogen-infused water. Yuck, but cool.

I feel like women in the Western world should be throwing some kind of solemn party right now. Maybe with grey balloons and gluten-free vegan cupcakes?

Because the celebration is weird. It's dark (can you really celebrate bad things just because they've been acknowledged?). And anyway, it feels like we've been waiting for this "party" for so long, we're all too tired to enjoy it.

We'd be celebrating the fact that we're finally being heard — I mean, we've been heard before, but there seems to be less eye-rolling now.

Fifty years ago, if a woman had gone to a reporter and said, "That radio host slapped me around and tried to choke me," chances are he would have responded, "And?"

But while these victories are big, important pieces of the pie, let's not forget to keep an eye on the pie crumbs — the little pieces of sexist pastry that get stuck under our manicures on a day-to-day basis.

Like when male co-workers call me "Sweetheart" or "Dear" (I am not your girlfriend or your grandmother, thank God).

Or the fact that women still make 74 per cent of what men make (and have that money ripped from our hands twice as quickly at places such as the dry cleaner, where our shirts cost more to clean because they fall under the derogatory category of "blouses.")

When last month's Hollaback video (displaying a woman being berated with catcalls on the streets of New York City) was released, the backlash was frightening.

Changing times

Fifty years ago, if a woman had gone to a reporter and said, "That radio host slapped me around and tried to choke me," chances are he would have responded, "And?"

Angry men (and some women) took to Twitter, asking things like, "Can't you take a compliment?"

Sure I can — from a friend, or my brother or even the guy who runs my corner store.

But when I'm walking alone at 10 p.m. and a total stranger yells, "Gimme some of that!" I feel less complimented, more afraid for my life.

Why is your right to yell more important than our right to feel safe and un-demeaned?

This is about feminism, which has somehow become a bad word.

If you look up *feminist* in the dictionary, all it says is: someone who believes in the political, economic and social equality of the sexes. It doesn't say man-hater; it doesn't say hairy woman (though there is a picture of Ani DiFranco).

We wouldn't be here at the weird, melancholy party (the streamers are beige) if it weren't for feminists.

It's the feminists (whether they even know they're feminists or not) that push these important issues forward like a car that's run out of gas on the road.

Without the feminists, Jian Ghomeshi wouldn't be sharing a TV tray with his mom right now.

Rebecca Kohler is a stand-up comic, writer, actor, gymnast, lawyer and chemist. (Some of this isn't true.) Follow her on Twitter at @becca_kohler

Happy face/Sad face

From misogynists getting banned to rogue celebrity tigers, Metro weighs in on the personalities that made headlines this week:

BLACKBERRY

This week BlackBerry offered to pay iPhone users up to $550 to switch to a Passport. Awesome deal or pathetic attempt at making friends? You decide. Also: flip phones are in again!

SINGAPORE

Singapore got a thumbs-up from feminists worldwide this week when it joined a growing list of countries to ban self-proclaimed pick-up artist Julien Blanc. The American dating coach has been accused of encouraging the use of sexual violence and emotional abuse to pick up women. Dude ... no.

DOPING

Don't dope and cycle. It didn't work for Lance Armstrong and it evidently hasn't worked for William Goodfellow. The Canadian cyclist has just been barred from competition for two years after testing positive for two banned substances. Maybe he didn't watch the Oprah special.

CHINA

You may be as surprised to read this as we are to write it: China gives free medication to people living with HIV/AIDS. Yes, *that* China. Now if we could only get those medications to the roughly 25 million and counting people infected with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.

PUTIN'S TIGER

Ustin, a rare Siberian tiger released into the wild by Vladimir Putin, is behaving badly at his new home in China. The tiger has killed 15 goats and left another three missing. "When I opened the goat house in the morning, dead goats were everywhere," said farm owner Guo Yulin. Oh, Ustin...

metro

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Terrible trio not the worst ever

Horrible Bosses 2. From Working Girl and Swimming with Sharks to The Devil Wears Prada, Hollywood has feasted on truly nasty power-mad bosses

Horrible Bosses 2 would have to go a long way to top the worst movie bosses ever. CONTRIBUTED

At one time or another everyone has fantasized about, if not killing, then at least doing grievous bodily harm to an employer. The guys in Horrible Bosses, the 2011 comedy starring Jason Bateman, Charlie Day and Jason Sudeikis, actually tried to make their fantasies reality.

The idea of squaring off against the boss man struck a chord with a lot of people and the movie raked in more than $100 million. So the inevitable sequel, Horrible Bosses 2, hit theatres earlier this week.

They'll have to go some ways to top the last trio of bad bosses: Jennifer Aniston as a foul-mouthed sexual predator with a bad habit of using laughing gas as foreplay; a manic boss with no scruples in the form of Kevin Spacey; and a drug-addled loser with a penchant for cocaine and masseuses who inherits a business from his papa, played by Colin Farrell, who berates his employees for coming in late after attending his dad's and their old boss's funeral.

"Well, maybe that excuse would have flown when my dad was here, but I'm in charge now."

But even that terrible trio pales in comparison to the worst movie bosses of all time.

One of the worst is Working Girl's Katharine Parker (Sigourney Weaver).

Parker is two-faced, and attempts to pass off her trusted secretary Tess McGill's (Melanie Griffith) ideas as her own.

Roger Ebert said of Weaver's performance, "From her first frame on the screen, she has to say all the right things while subtly suggesting that she may not mean any of them."

In the end, Tess teaches her a lesson about honesty and gets Katharine fired.

Katharine looks like a pussycat compared to Buddy Ackerman (Kevin Spacey), the tyrannical Hollywood producer in Swimming with Sharks.

"You are nothing!" he says to his new assistant Guy (Frank Whaley). "If you were in my toilet I wouldn't bother flushing it. My bathmat means more to me than you!"

Guy finally snaps, kidnaps Buddy and tortures him. But in an unexpected twist, the extreme behaviour earns Buddy's respect and Guy gets a promotion.

Finally, if you mix the swooping white hair and bad attitude of Cruella DeVille with the people skills of Vlad the Impaler, you will come up with Miranda Priestly, the worst boss in all of moviedom.

Played by Meryl Streep in The Devil Wears Prada, Priestly is the editrix of a fictional fashion magazine called Runway who never met an assistant she couldn't humiliate with a withering glance and a few choice words.

"By all means, move at a glacial pace," she says to newbie Andy Sachs (Anne Hathaway). "You know how that thrills me."

In Review

RICHARD CROUSE

Kevin Spacey as Buddy Ackerman in Swimming with the Sharks. CONTRIBUTED

Pomp or puffery for chilly nights

December is an awkward time at the movies. The Oscar race is winding down, with studios cranking out the last of their prestige pictures. At the same time, a ton of people have time off, and want to spend it watching silly cinema. There will be blockbusters that get acclaim and acclaimed movies that become blockbusters. But then there's the third Night at the Museum entry, plus a movie where Seth Rogen and James Franco try to kill Kim Jong-un. Here's how the divide goes this year.

MATT PRIGGE
Metro World News in New York City

POPCORN

Exodus: Gods and Kings

What: The Ten Commandments story — most famously told in the 1956 Easter staple The Ten Commandments — gets told again, this time by a non-believer (Ridley Scott), with Christian Bale attempting to wipe away memories of Charlton Heston. Good luck!

How populist: Midwestern audiences ate up tiny religious films like God's Not Dead. In fact, that film made only $40 million less in America than the super-pricey Noah. Then again, while this is a full-on biblical epic, it's actually 100 minutes shorter than the Heston version.

Top Five

What: Chris Rock's third go at directing is an improv-heavy dramedy about a Chris Rock-like movie star (played by Chris Rock) hitting it off with a reporter (Rosario Dawson) the day of his new drama's release.

How populist: Rock made this independently, and it has a rough, handmade quality that could serve as an antidote to studio comedies, including ones Rock himself has made.

Annie

What: It's been 32 years since the John Huston movie of the sometimes blood-curdling stage musical, so here's one with Quvenzhane Wallis, plus Jamie Foxx as a toupéed Daddy Warbucks — or, wait, he's called Will Stacks? Where's the fun in that?

How populist: Little girls rarely get movies tailored to their desires, so maybe don't screw this one up?

The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies

What: Only five armies? The final chapter in an epic take on a 300-page novel intended for children finally comes to a close, and surely it will test how much Benedict Cumberbatch-voiced dragon fighting you can stand before going insane.

How populist: These things are bizarrely popular, especially considering how padded out and long they are. But hey, what's good for Martin Freeman is good for the world (maybe).

Editor's choice

The Interview

What: The movie that could get America destroyed by impoverished and ill-equipped North Korea stars Seth Rogen and James Franco as reporters asked by the CIA to kill Kim Jong-un.

How populist: Franco is secretly a prolific director of arty films; Rogen's own movies (like This is the End) are broad comedies. That said, the last time Rogen attempted to storm the holiday movie box office, it was the middling The Guilt Trip.

In The Interview, James Franco and Seth Rogen play reporters asked by the CIA to kill North Korea leader Kim Jong-un. CONTRIBUTED

Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb

What: Sad, but true; these are the most successful films Ben Stiller has ever been involved with. This one comes with a deep melancholic streak: Among its cast members are late performers Robin Williams and Mickey Rooney.

How populist: These are popular, but why?

Into the Woods

What: Meryl Streep, Johnny Depp and a bunch of other popular Hollywood stars round out Stephen Sondheim's beloved musical, in which fairy tales are mashed together.

How populist: Remember when movie musicals were dead? The only catch is Sondheim is a musical lover's musical writer, although his often-difficult and densely written tunes are here tacked onto a very clever pastiche — with a grim second half, incidentally.

Prestige

Wild

What: Reese Witherspoon portrays Cheryl Strayed, who hiked about 1,800 kilometres of the Pacific Crest Trail alone. Don't worry: There are a lot of flashbacks, plus a script by Nick Hornby.

How prestigious: Witherspoon goes back to her indie roots. Her Strayed is not only haunted — with a traumatic history involving death, divorce and drugs — but also hilariously cranky.

The Gambler

What: A remake of one of the 1970s' grimmest films, this potty-mouthed drama (written by The Departed's William Monahan) stars Mark Wahlberg as a self-destructive rich kid who owes a ton of money to three different, scary people.

How prestigious: Despite a new ending, this keeps the miserable '70s vibe, and Marky Mark, who can be dour in dramas, is as electric as in comedies like I Heart Huckabees.

Mr. Turner

What: English filmmaker Mike Leigh, everyone's favourite, is back with another immaculately researched historical piece, this one about 19th-century sea painter J.M.W. Turner (Timothy Spall).

How prestigious: Leigh crafts his movies with the actors, and Spall is one of his frequent and best thespians. If Spall doesn't get an Oscar nod, he should get a special trophy for his amazing and frequent mouth noises.

Leviathan

What: A Russian drama loosely based on the book of Job, about a drunken everyman whose life is gradually undone by an evil bureaucrat, an old friend and his neglected wife.

How prestigious: This is Russia's submission for the Best Foreign Language Film, from the very acclaimed Andrey Zvyagintsev (Elena).

Big Eyes

What: Tim Burton tries his hand at plain drama, telling the true story of artist Margaret Keane (Amy Adams), whose husband (Christoph Waltz) claimed her works were his.

How prestigious: The last time Burton did a biopic was Ed Wood, which nabbed Martin Landau an Oscar. This one shares the same writers, Scott Alexander and Larry Karaszewski, who know a thing or two about subverting the genre.

Editor's choice

Unbroken

What: Three years ago, Angelina Jolie surprised holiday viewers with the super-bleak The Land of Milk and Honey. She does it again, telling of Louie Zamperini, a WWII-era Olympian who spent 47 days on a raft and then another 2-1/2 years in a POW camp.

How prestigious: Jolie has the clout to do whatever she wants, but it's not yet clear what kind of filmmaker she is. This sounds like a "triumph of the human spirit" deal, but Milk and Honey was so dark; this may be, too.

Angelina Jolie's Unbroken tells the true story of Louie Zamperini, a WWII-era Olympian who spent 2-1/2 years in a POW camp. CONTRIBUTED

American Sniper

What: So what did you do this year? Because, compared to Clint Eastwood, you did nothing. At 84, the actor-filmmaker has directed two features in 2014 alone, this one with Bradley Cooper as America's most "successful" sniper.

How prestigious: Eastwood needs a hit, his last run of pictures were neither critically nor commercially loved. That's not to say they weren't good.

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Action

Wolves

Director. David Hayter

Stars. Lucas Till, Jason Momoa

Popular high school student Cayden Richards wakes from a horrific nightmare, only to realize that he's living it ... He is changing into something vicious, unpredictable and wild. Forced to hit the road after the brutal murder of his parents, Cayden tries to hunt down the truth of what he is. In the remote, mountain town of Lupine Ridge, he discovers others like him.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 33% **Audience:** + 87%

Drama

The Theory of Everything

Director. James Marsh

Stars. Eddie Redmayne, Felicity Jones

Starring Eddie Redmayne (Les Misérables) and Felicity Jones (The Amazing Spider-Man 2), this is the extraordinary story of one of the world's greatest living minds, the renowned astrophysicist Stephen Hawking, who falls deeply in love with fellow Cambridge student Jane Wilde.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 81% **Audience:** 83%

Drama

Rosewater

Director. Jon Stewart

Stars. Gael García Bernal, Kim Bodnia

Rosewater is based on The New York Times best-selling memoir Then They Came for Me: A Family's Story of Love, Captivity, and Survival, written by Maziar Bahari. The film marks the directorial debut of The Daily Show host Jon Stewart, and stars Gael García Bernal. Rosewater follows the Tehran-born Bahari, a broadcast journalist with Canadian citizenship.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 73% **Audience:** + 91%

Comedy

Horrible Bosses 2

Director. Sean Anders

Stars. Jason Bateman, Jason Sudeikis, Charlie Day

The followup to the 2011 hit comedy Horrible Bosses reunites Jason Bateman, Charlie Day and Jason Sudeikis as everyone's favourite working stiffs: Nick, Dale and Kurt. Jennifer Aniston (We're the Millers), and Oscar winners Jamie Foxx (Ray) and Kevin Spacey (American Beauty, The Usual Suspects) also reprise their Horrible Bosses starring roles.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 35% **Audience:** 65%

Drama

Whiplash

Director. Damien Chazelle

Stars. Miles Teller, J.K. Simmons

Andrew Neyman is an ambitious young jazz drummer, single-minded in his pursuit to rise to the top of his elite east coast music conservatory. Plagued by the failed writing career of his father, Andrew hungers day and night to become one of the greats. Terence Fletcher, an instructor equally known for his teaching talents as for his terrifying methods, leads the top jazz ensemble in the school.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 96% **Audience:** 94%

Sci-Fi & Adventure

Interstellar

Director. Christopher Nolan

Stars. Matthew McConaughey, Anne Hathaway, Jessica Chastain

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Reese plays Wild card as actor and producer

Movies. Hollywood star banks on toughest role by developing film she wanted to see made

Reese Withersppon in Wild. CONTRIBUTED

Once she'd decided to take on her gritty new role in Wild, there were a few things Reese Witherspoon knew she *didn't* want to hear from movie studio executives:

"We want her to be more likable."

"We don't want her to use drugs."

"We don't want her to be profane."

And so, Witherspoon says, she didn't give them the chance.

She developed the film, which follows a hard-living woman's path to solace and redemption via a long trek in the wilderness, outside the studio system under the auspices of her own production company, with private financing. "And then I took it to the studios and said, 'I'm not changing a word,'" Witherspoon recounts in an interview. "And I had three bids on it that day."

"And I think it's important, you know?" the actress adds. "You grow up, you change — I'm a 38-year-old woman now, I have three kids, and I've lived a lot of life experience. It's really important to me that the things I put out into the world are meaningful and thought-provoking. Otherwise, what am I doing?"

Witherspoon as producer

"I was seeing ... a deficit in leading roles for women. It was just sort of the lack of complex characters, of interesting, dynamic women onscreen."

Reese Witherspoon

Wild, based on the best-selling memoir by Cheryl Strayed, is a story of personal catharsis, and listening to Witherspoon, one gets the sense she was seeking a sort of professional catharsis by choosing it. The role, which has garnered significant Oscar buzz, includes difficult scenes depicting rough sex and heroin use. Witherspoon wore no makeup and spent days lugging a heavy backpack up and down hills.

"By far, it's the hardest thing I've done in my life," she says. "The physical aspects were really challenging — the elements, the heat, the cold, the water, the rain, 55 locations in 35 days, and carrying that backpack. And there was nothing else to cut to — just me."

Witherspoon, who already has one Oscar on the mantelpiece for 2005's Walk the Line, says it was no accident that she chose such a film at this point in her career, a time that finds her veering away from trademark sunny, bright roles and romantic comedies.

"It's something I consciously did for myself," she says. Her production company, Pacific Standard, is specifically geared toward projects with complex roles for women.

"I was seeing sort of a deficit in leading roles for women," she says. "It was just sort of the lack of complex characters, of interesting, dynamic women onscreen. I have a 15-year-old daughter and it's very important to me what she sees, in movies and television." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Steve Carell takes a risk, channels his dark side

Interview. Barely recognizable in a prosthetic nose, the actor better known as Michael Scott gets creepy in Foxcatcher

Director Bennett Miller chose Steve Carell (pictured here) for role because he saw dark side to the comic. CONTRIBUTED

While discussing Foxcatcher — a bleak film, based on an unsettling tragedy, that made its way to screen after a punishing shoot — there's really only one instance where Steve Carell's voice rises above a sombre whisper.

In fact, he even breaks out laughing, and oddly enough, the topic at hand is director Bennett Miller's admission that he cast Carell as ominous multi-millionaire John du Pont because he saw a certain darkness in the usually goofy comic actor.

"As he describes it, he felt that my public persona is sort of a benign one — as was du Pont's. No one expected him to do the thing that he did," said Carell during the Toronto International Film Festival.

"As he described it to me, he felt that it was beneficial to the movie to have someone who you wouldn't necessarily think could do something horrible. But at the same time, it happens, I guess he saw, as he describes it, there was a dark —"

Here, he trails off and giggles, in his unique way.

"I laugh about it. It sounds funny for me to describe him saying that there's a dark side to me," he said, chortling again, before collecting himself.

"But apparently he saw something, when we first met, that there was a quality there that he seemed to pick up on."

Carell would reward that hunch several times over with a chilling, transformative performance that should, if the pundits are to be believed, land him an Academy Award nomination.

The 52-year-old portrays du Pont, a hermetic eccentric who took a toxic interest in the life of an Olympic gold medallist wrestler, Mark Schultz (Channing Tatum), and his similarly decorated brother, Dave (Mark Ruffalo).

The real Mark Schultz was a presence onset during the making of the film, as were others involved in the grisly tale.

Carell, vaguely recognizable under the weight of grey-toned facial prosthetics, seemed to skulk about the set in fitting isolation. In the film, he drips his lines out slowly, wearing an expression of inscrutable distance — and seemingly that distance remained when the cameras stopped rolling.

"We didn't get to know each other as ourselves as we were shooting," said the Golden Globe winner of his castmates.

"It wasn't in a pretentious way. We weren't deciding to be all method-y, all serious actor-ish. But at the same time I think we both realized it would be better for the movie and for our characters' relationship to keep each other at a distance, and we did."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"I read the script and I thought it was an extraordinarily rich story. I never thought about whether I could or couldn't do it." Steve Carell

THESE PAGES COVER MOVIE START TIMES FROM FRI., NOV. 28 TO THURS., DEC. 4 TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Canyon Meadows
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Annabelle (14A) Fri-Thu 9:15
The Best of Me (PG) Fri-Thu 9:50
The Book of Life (G) Fri-Thu 1:20-4:20-6:45-9:25
The Boxtrolls (PG) Fri-Thu 1:30-3:50-7:10
Dolphin Tale 2 (G) Fri-Thu 12:55-3:45
Dracula Untold (14A) Fri-Wed 7:15-9:45 Thu 7:15
The Equalizer (14A) Fri-Thu 1-4-6:55-9:40
Guardians of the Galaxy (PG) Fri-Thu 1:15-4:10-7:05-9:50
How to Train Your Dragon 2 (PG) Fri-Thu 1:25-4:15-7:20
The Hundred-Foot Journey (PG) Fri-Thu 1-3:55-7-9:40
The Judge (14A) Fri-Thu 12:50-3:45-6:50-9:25
The Maze Runner (PG) Fri-Thu 1:10-3:40-7:05-9:40
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (PG) Fri-Thu 1:05-6:55
This Is Where I Leave You (14A) Fri-Thu 4-9:35

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Big Hero 6 (G) Fri-Thu 1:30-4:10
Big Hero 6 3D (G) Fri-Sun 11:35-2:15-4:55-7:35-10:15 Mon-Thu 2:15-4:55-7:35-10:15
Dumb and Dumber To (PG) Fri-Sun 11:45-2:25-5:05-7:45-10:20 Mon-Thu 2:25-5:05-7:45-10:20
Fury (14A) Fri-Thu 10
Gone Girl (18A) Fri-Sun 11:50-3:15-6:45-10:10 Mon-Tue 3:15-6:45-10:10 Wed 1:30-10:10 Thu 3:15-6:45-10:10
Horrible Bosses 2 (14A) No Passes Fri-Sun 11:55-2:35-5:15-7:55-10:30 No Passes Mon-Tue 2:35-5:15-7:55-10:30 No Passes Wed 5:15-7:55-10:30 No Passes Thu 2:35-5:15-7:55-10:30 Star & Strollers Screening, No Passes Wed 1:30
The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 1 (PG) No Passes Fri-Sun 12:05-12:50-1:35-3:05-3:50-4:35-6:05-6:50-7:30-9:05-9:55-10:25 No Passes Mon-Thu 12:50-1:35-3:05-3:50-4:35-6:05-6:50-7:30-9:05-9:55-10:25
Interstellar (PG) Fri-Thu 2:30-6:10-9:50
The LEGO Movie (G) Sat 11
Penguins of Madagascar (G) No Passes Fri-Sun 12:30-2:55-5:20-7:40 No Passes Mon-Tue 1:40-4:05-6:30 No Passes Wed 4:05-6:30 No Passes Thu 1:40-4:05-6:30 Star & Strollers Screening, No Passes Wed 1:30
Penguins of Madagascar 3D (G) No Passes Fri-Sun 11:40-2:10-4:30-7-9:25 No Passes Mon-Thu 2:10-4:30-7-9:25
St. Vincent (PG) Fri-Thu 7:25-10:05
Women Who Flirt (PG) Fri-Thu 1:15-3:45-6:40-9:15

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Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance) (14A) Fri 7:05-10 Sat-Sun 1-4-7:05-10 Mon-Thu 6-8:50
Horrible Bosses 2 (14A) No Passes Fri 7:10-10:10 No Passes Sat-Sun 1:20-4:30-7:10-10:10 No Passes Mon-Thu 5:40-8:20
The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 1 (PG) No Passes Fri 6:50-9:50 No Passes Sat-Sun 12:50-3:50-6:50-9:50 No Passes Mon-Thu 5:50-8:40
Interstellar (PG) Fri 8:10 Sat-Sun 12:20-4:20-8:10 Mon-Thu 8:10
The Theory of Everything (G) Fri 6:30-9:30 Sat-Sun 12:30-3:30-6:30-9:30 Mon-Thu 5:30-8:30
Whiplash (14A) Fri 6:40-9:40 Sat-Sun 1:10-4:10-6:40-9:40 Mon-Tue 5:20-8 Wed 9:30 Thu 5:20-8

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Big Hero 6 (G) Fri 12:10-3:10-6:10 Sat-Sun 10:45-12:10-3:10-6:10 Mon-Tue 3:10-6:10 Wed-Thu 3:10
Big Hero 6 3D (G) Fri-Sun 1:20-4:20-7:10-10 Mon-Thu 4:20-7:10-10
Chaar Sahibzaade 3D (PG) Fri 1:10-4:05-6:50-9:50 Sat-Sun 10:40-1:10-4:05-6:50-9:50 Mon-Thu 4:05-6:50-9:50
Corner Gas: The Movie (PG) Wed-Thu 7
Dumb and Dumber To (PG) Fri 1:50-4:45 Sat 1:50-10:15 Sun 1:50-4:45-10:15 Mon-Tue 4:45-7:30-10:15 Wed 4:45-7:30 Thu 4:45-7:30-10:15 Fri 7:30-10:15 Sat 4:45-7:30 Sun 7:30 Wed 10:15
The Equalizer (14A) Fri-Thu 9:45
Happy Ending (PG) Fri-Sun 2-6 Mon-Thu 6
Horrible Bosses 2 (14A) Fri-Sun 1:30-4:30-7:15-9:25-9:55 Mon-Thu 4:30-7:15-9:25-9:55
The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 1 (PG) Fri 2-5-6:20-9:30 Sat 12:30-2-5-6:20-9-9:30 Sun 1-2-3:30-4-7-8-9:30 Mon-Tue 3-3:30-4-5-6-6:20-7-8-9-9:30-10:10 Wed 5-6:20-9:30 Thu 3-3:30-4-5-6-6:20-7-8-9-9:30-10:10 Fri 12-12:30-1-3-3:30-4-6-7-8-9-10:10 Sat 11-12-1-3-3:30-4-6-7-8-10:10 Sun 3-6:20-10:10 Wed 1 Sun 11-12-12:30-5-6-9 Wed 3-3:30-4-6-7-8-9-10:10

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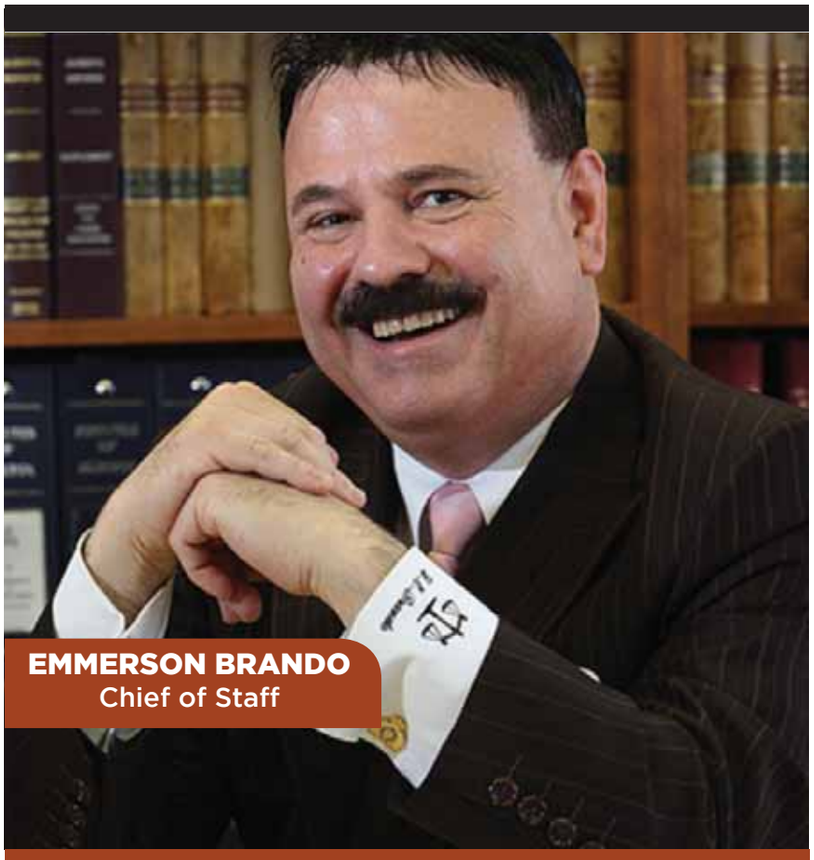

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Interstellar: The IMAX Experience (PG) Fri-Sun 12:20-4:10-7:50 Mon-Tue 4:10-7:50 Wed 7:50 Thu 4:10-7:50 Wed 4:10
Penguins of Madagascar (G) Fri-Sun 12:50-3:20-6:30-9:15 Mon-Thu 3:20-6:30-9:15 Sat-Sun 10:35
Penguins of Madagascar 3D (G) Fri 1:40-4:50-7:20-10 Sat-Sun 10:55-1:40-4:50-7:20-10 Mon-Thu 4:50-7:20-10
Royal Opera House: I Due Foscari (STC) Sat 11
The Theory of Everything (G) Fri 12:40-3:45-6:40-9:40 Sat-Sun 10:55-12:40-3:45-6:40-9:40 Mon-Thu 3:45-6:40-9:40
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Dumb and Dumber To (PG) Fri-Thu 12:15-3-7:20-10:15
Horrible Bosses 2 (14A) Fri 1:45-4:45-7:45-10-10:30 Sat-Sun 10:30-1:45-4:45-7:45-10-10:30 Mon-Thu 1:45-4:45-7:45-10-10:30
The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 1 (PG) Fri-Thu 1-4:15-7:30-10:30 Fri-Tue 12-12:30-3:15-3:45-6:30-7-9:45-10:15 Wed 1 Thu 12-3:45-6:30-10:15 Wed 12-3:15-3:45-6:30-7-9:45-10:15 Thu 12:30-3:15-7-9:45
Interstellar (PG) Fri 12-4-8 Sat 4-8 Sun-Wed 12-4-8 Thu 4-8
Penguins of Madagascar (G) Fri 12:45-3:30-6:10 Sat-Sun 10-12:45-3:30-6:10 Mon-Thu 12:45-3:30-6:10
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Royal Opera House: I Due Foscari (STC) Sat 11
The Theory of Everything (G) Fri 12:15-3:15-9:40 Sat 12:15-3:15-6:20-9:40 Sun 3:15-9:40 Mon-Tue 12:15-3:15-6:20-9:40 Wed 12:15-6:20 Thu 12:15-3:15-6:20-9:40 Fri 6:20 Sun 12:15-6:20 Wed 3:15-9:40

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The Dance of Reality (18A) Fri-Sat 9:20 Sun-Thu 9
GIRAF 10: Festival of Independent Animation (STC) Fri 7-9-11:15 Sat 5-7-9
Walking the Camino: Six Ways to Santiago (PG) Fri-Sat 7:20 Sun 1:10-3-7:10 Mon-Thu 7:10

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Big Hero 6 (G) Fri-Sun 11:05-1:45-4:25-7 Mon-Wed 12:15-3:15-7:35 Thu 12:15-4:45-7:35
Big Hero 6 3D (G) Fri-Sun 11:50-2:30-5:10-7:45-10:30 Mon-Thu 1:35-4:15-7-9:45
Corner Gas: The Movie (PG) Wed-Thu 7
Dumb and Dumber To (PG) Fri 11:15-12-1:55-2:40-4:35-5:20-7:15-8-9:55-10:40 Sat 12-1:55-2:40-4:35-5:20-7:15-8-9:55-10:40 Sun 11:15-12-1:55-2:40-4:35-5:20-7:15-8-9:55-10:40 Mon-Thu 12-1-2:40-3:55-5:15-6:50-7:50-9:40-10:30
Fury (14A) Fri-Sun 12:50-3:55-7:20-10:25 Mon-Thu 1-4:05-7:15-10:20
Gone Girl (18A) Fri-Sat 12:15-3:35-6:55-10:15 Sun 3:35-6:55-10:15 Mon-Tue 12:25-3:40-7:05-10:20 Wed-Thu 12:25-3:40-10:20
Horrible Bosses 2 (14A) No Passes Fri-Sun 11:10-12:10-1:50-2:50-4:30-5:30-7:10-8:10-9:50-10:50 No Passes Mon-Wed 12:10-1:50-2:50-4:30-5:25-7:10-8-9:50-10:40 No Passes Thu 12:10-2:50-4:30-5:25-7:10-8-9:50-10:40 Star & Strollers Screening, No Passes Thu 1
The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 1 (PG) No Passes Fri-Sun 12:20-12:50-3:20-3:50-6:20-6:50-9:20-9:50 No Passes Mon-Wed 12:20-2:30-3:20-5:30-6:20-8:30-9:20 No Passes Thu 2:30-3:20-5:30-6:20-8:30-9:20 No Passes Fri-Sun 11-1:50-4:50-7:50-10:45 No Passes Mon-Thu 1:30-4:30-7:30-10:30 No Passes Fri-Sun 1:20-4:20-7:20-10:20 No Passes Mon-Thu 12:50-3:50-6:50-9:50 Star & Strollers Screening, No Passes Thu 1
Interstellar (PG) Fri-Sat 11:45-3:25-7:05-10:45 Sun 11:40-3:25-7:05-10:45 Mon-Thu 12:30-4:25-8:15
Interstellar: The IMAX Experience (PG) Fri-Sun 11:15-3-6:40-10:20 Mon-Thu 2-5:30-9
John Wick (14A) Fri 12:25-3-5:30-8:05-10:40 Sat 3-5:30-8:05-10:40 Sun 12:25-3-5:30-8:05-10:40 Mon-Wed 12:30-3-7:20-10:10 Thu 7:20-10:10
The LEGO Movie (G) Sat 11
The Metropolitan Opera: Carmen Encore (STC) Sat 9:55 Sun 10:55
Nightcrawler (14A) Fri-Sun 9:40 Mon-Thu 10:15
Penguins of Madagascar (G) No Passes Fri-Thu 12-2:25-4:50-7:15
Penguins of Madagascar 3D (G) No Passes Fri 12:45-3:10-5:35-8-10:25 No Passes Sat 12:40-3:10-5:35-8-10:25 No Passes Sun-Thu 12:45-3:10-5:35-8-10:25
St. Vincent (PG) Fri-Thu 9:40

Plaza Theatre
1133 Kensington Rd. N.W.

Awake: The Life of Yogananda (G) Sat 5:15-9:30 Sun-Mon 9:15
Gone Girl (18A) Fri 6:45 Sat 2:45-7 Mon-Wed 6:45
No Films Showing Today (STC) Thu

Sunridge Spectrum
2555 32nd Street

Big Hero 6 (G) Fri-Tue 1:10 Star & Strollers Screening Wed 1 Thu 1:10
Big Hero 6 3D (G) Fri-Thu 4:10-6:55-9:45
Chaar Sahibzaade 3D (PG) Fri-Sun 12:40-3:40-6:45-9:55 Mon-Thu 3:20-6:45-9:55
Dumb and Dumber To (PG) Fri-Sun 1:35-4:15-7:35-10:25 Mon-Thu 1:25-4:15-7:35-10:25
Happy Ending (PG) Fri-Sun 12:55-4:35-7:45 Mon-Thu 1:35-4:40-8:45
Happy Go Lucky (PG) Fri-Sun 1:15-4:45-8:25 Mon-Thu 4:45-8:25
Horrible Bosses 2 (14A) No Passes Fri 12-1:20-2:40-4:20-5:20-7:10-8-10:10-10:40 No Passes Sat 1:20-2:40-4:20-5:20-7:10-8-10:10-10:40 No Passes Sun 12-1:20-2:40-4:20-5:20-7:10-8-10:10-10:40 No Passes Mon-Tue 1:20-2:10-4:35-6:20-7:20-9-10:10 No Passes Wed 2:10-4:35-6:20-7:20-9-10:10 No Passes Thu 1:20-2:10-4:35-6:20-7:20-9-10:10 Star & Strollers Screening, No Passes Wed 1:30
The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 1 (PG) No Passes Fri-Sun 12:30-1:30-1:50-3:30-4:30-5-6:30-7:30-8:15-9:30-10:30 No Passes Mon-Thu 1:30-1:50-3-4:30-4:50-6:30-7:30-7:50-9:35-10:30 No Passes Fri-Thu 1-4-7-10
Interstellar (PG) Fri-Thu 1:40-6-9:40
The LEGO Movie (G) Sat 11
Penguins of Madagascar (G) No Passes Fri-Sun 12:45-3:10-5:35-8-10:20 No Passes Mon-Thu 2:10-6:10-8:35
Penguins of Madagascar 3D (G) No Passes Fri 12:15-2:40-5:05-7:25-9:50 No Passes Sat 2:40-5:05-7:25-9:50 No Passes Sun 12:15-2:40-5:05-7:25-9:50 No Passes Mon-Thu 1:05-3:30-7:10-9:30
The Uptown Stage & Screen
612 8th Ave. S.W., 403-265-0120

Westhills 10
165 Stewart Green

Big Hero 6 (G) Fri-Sun 12:45 Mon-Thu 3:55
Big Hero 6 3D (G) Fri-Sun 3:30-6:45-10:15 Mon-Thu 6:30-9:10
Corner Gas: The Movie (PG) Wed-Thu 8
Dumb and Dumber To (PG) Fri-Sun 1:15-4:15-7:05-10 Mon-Thu 6:45-9:25
Gone Girl (18A) Fri-Sun 9:30
Horrible Bosses 2 (14A) No Passes Fri-Sun 1:05-4:20-7:20-10:20 No Passes Mon-Thu 4:05-6:40-9:20
The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Part 1 (PG) No Passes Fri-Sun 1:10-4:10-7:10-10:10 No Passes Mon-Thu 5:30-8:30 No Passes Fri-Sat 12:35-1:30-3:35-4:30-6:40-7:30-9:40-10:30 No Passes Sun 12:35-1:30-3:35-4:30-6:40-7:30-9:40 No Passes Mon-Tue 4:15-5-7:10-9 No Passes Wed-Thu 4:15-5-9
Interstellar (PG) Fri-Sun 1:45-5:30-9:15 Mon-Thu 4:30-8:15
Penguins of Madagascar (G) No Passes Fri-Sun 12:30-3-6:30 No Passes Mon-Thu 4:45-7:30
Penguins of Madagascar 3D (G) No Passes Fri-Sun 1-4-7-9:45 No Passes Mon-Thu 4-6:20-8:40
The Theory of Everything (G) Fri-Sun 12:40-3:45-6:55-9:55 Mon-Thu 5:45-8:45

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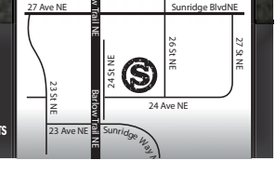

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Natalie Portman GETTY IMAGES

Portman latest name attached to Jobs biopic

Natalie Portman is in talks for the female lead in the upcoming Steve Jobs biopic penned by Aaron Sorkin, according to Deadline. The movie adapting Walter Isaacson's biography of the Apple co-founder is to be directed by Danny Boyle (Trainspotting, Slumdog Millionaire). Earlier this week, the biopic was picked up by Universal after being dropped by Sony. The movie had already suffered a series of setbacks after both Leonardo DiCaprio and Christian Bale turned down the main role. Michael Fassbender is expected to take the job although nothing has been confirmed. Seth Rogen is also reportedly in talks to portray Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak. In the meantime, Natalie Portman will star in Gavin O'Connor's Jane Got a Gun, slated for a February release. **AFP**

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

The Word

Thank Bowie's mum for duet with Der Bingle

NED EHRBAR
Metro in Hollywood

Santa has made his way down Broadway for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, which means it's officially the Christmas season. So let's kick it off with one of the more interesting pop culture yuletide curios, David Bowie and Bing Crosby singing Little Drummer Boy for a 1977 TV special.

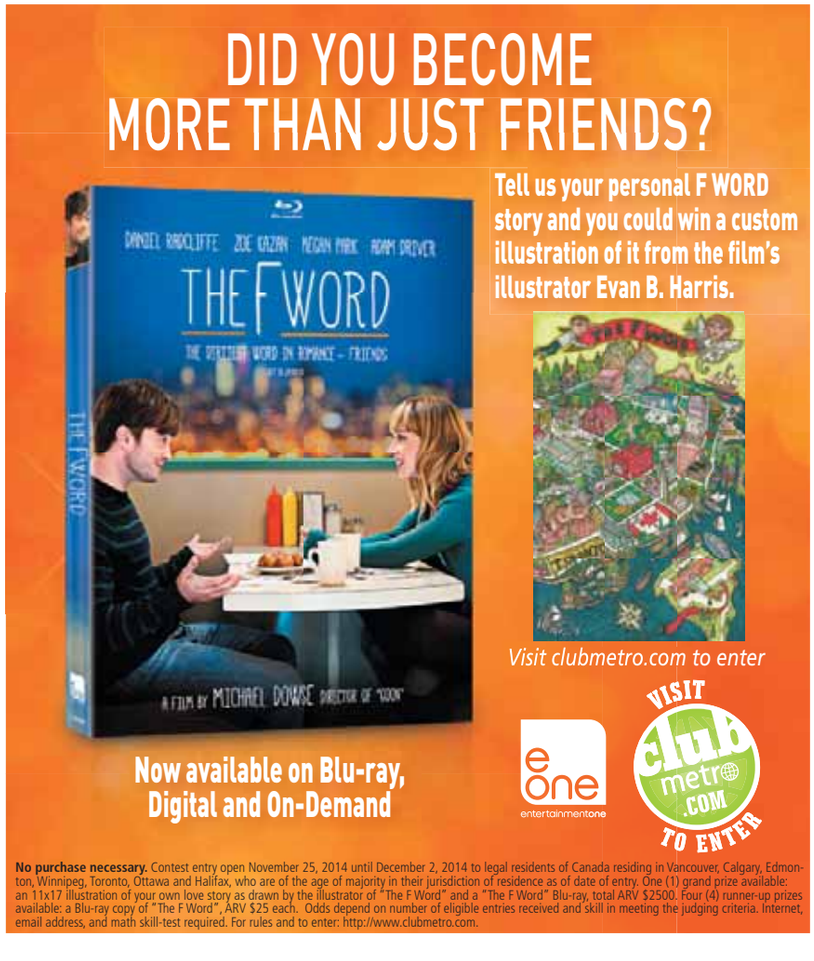
As it turns out, Bowie only did the special because "my mother loves Bing Crosby," he told Larry Grossman, the writer of A Merrie Old Christmas.

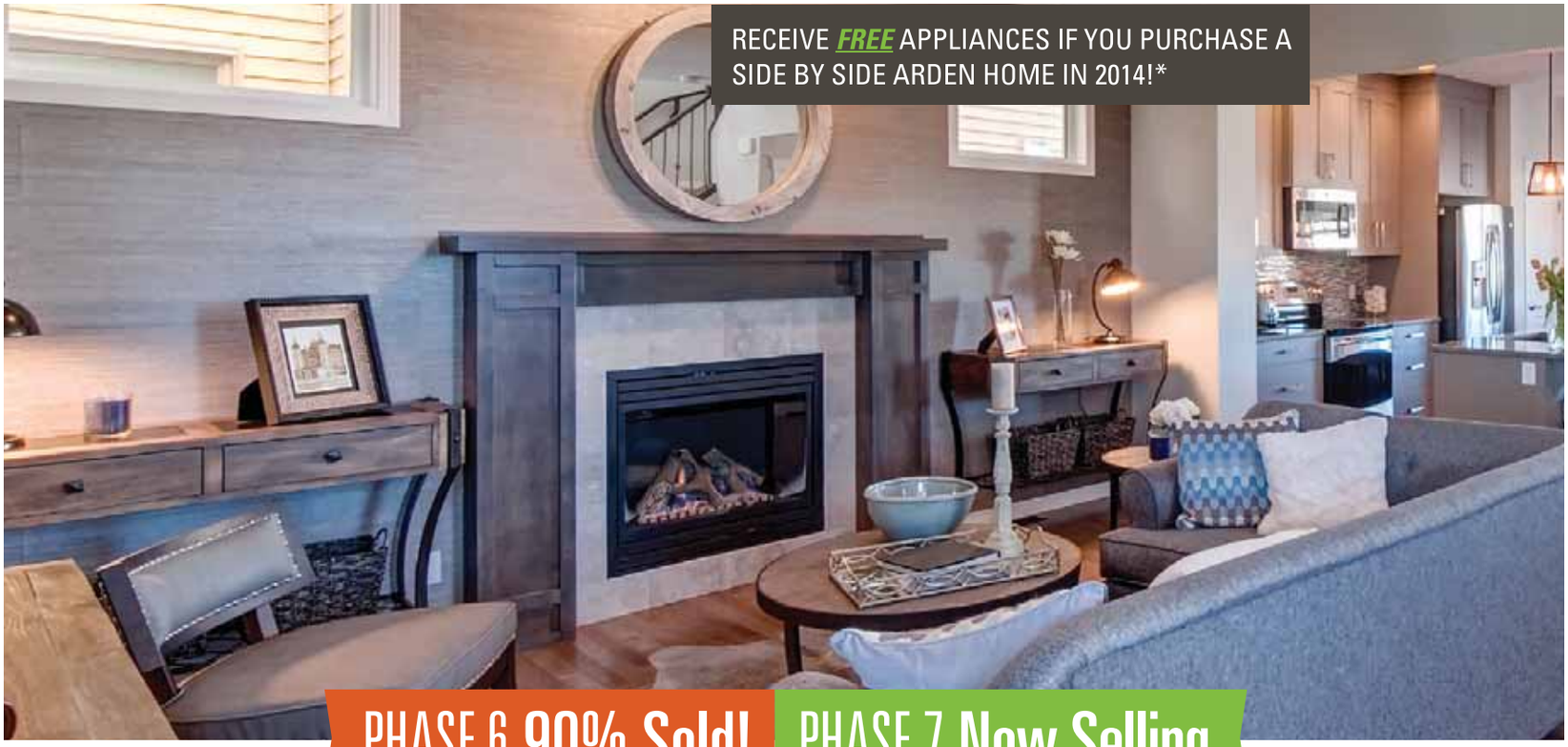
And he also was dead set against singing Little Drummer Boy and would only be talked into it thanks to a slight rearrangement of the song.

Drew Carey GETTY IMAGES

Carey, Mayer, Apatow to guest host Late Late Show

Singer John Mayer, filmmaker Judd Apatow and comic Drew Carey will be among the guest hosts that will fill in on CBS's The Late Late Show before new host James Corden takes over in March. The network announced its plans this week for the 12:37 a.m. time slot for the winter months after current host Craig Ferguson leaves. Ferguson's last show will be Dec. 19. Carey will host the first week of January and the last week before Corden starts. In between, actors Will Arnett, Wayne Brady, Jim Gaffigan, Billy Gardell, Sean Hayes, Thomas Lennon and Kunal Nayyar will take turns as host. CBS will also air special late-night editions of its daytime chat show, The Talk, for a week in January. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**





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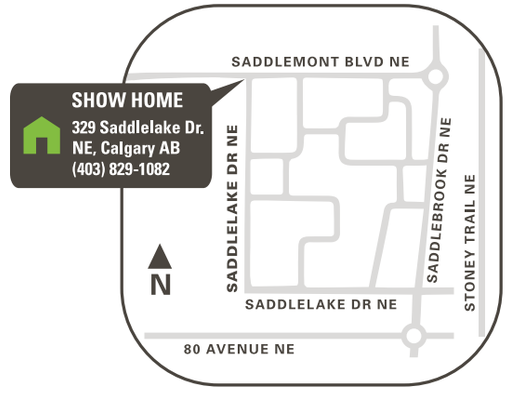

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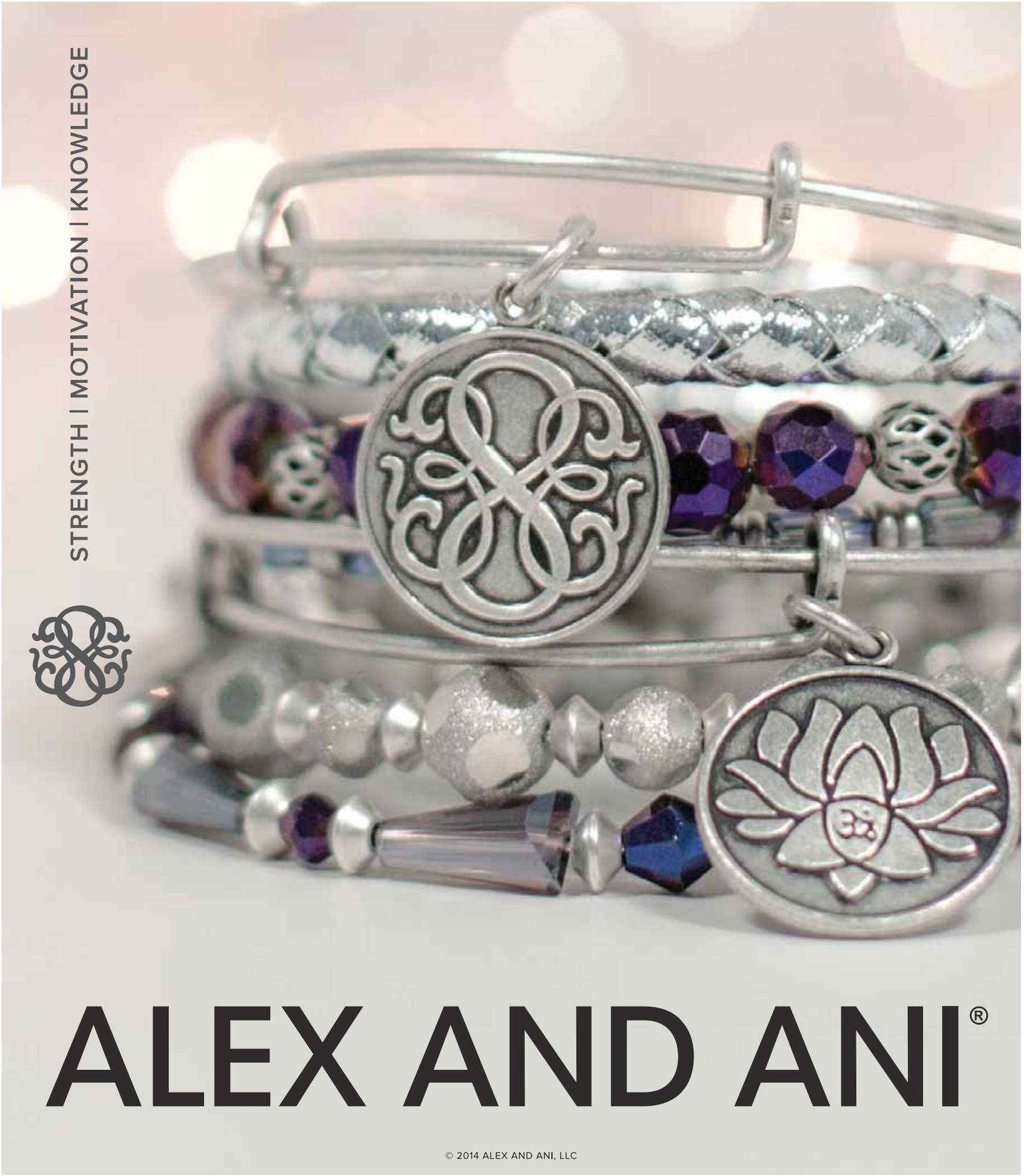

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Paw-pular gift ideas for your furry friends

Doggone excited. Your pets do, in fact, know it's the holidays — so don't disappoint them

27 shopping days left

YLVA VAN BUUREN
For Metro

It's easy to remember to put the dog or cat on your Christmas list — they're the ones sniffing around under the tree or trying to climb it. Here are fabulous gift ideas for your four-legged friends.

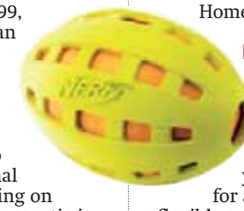
Time to eat
Serve up breakfast, lunch or dinner in these ceramic pet bowls. They're practical and cute. $4.99 each, Home Sense.

Santa ... Guinea
Now you can dress the family guinea pig in a red velvet Santa hat and suit. (If you prefer, there are reindeer antlers for the guinea pig, too). $7.99, PetSmart.

Put up your hoodie
Dress up your pooch in this stylish Canadian North Fetch hoodie ... and bring on winter. North Fetch outdoor gear retails for $39.99 to $48.99, PetSmart.

Luv-A-Pet
Wrap up this lovable stuffed toy ... and give back, too. Ten per cent of each Luv-A-Pet purchase is donated to PetSmart Charities of Canada to help homeless pets. Now that feels good. $8.99, PetSmart.

Fido football
Your dog will love the Nerf Green Crinkle Football. It's long-lasting and safe to play with inside or out. $9.99, Canadian Tire.



Still life
Artist Kari Serrao will work from a photo to create an original encaustic painting on a wood panel (encaustic is painting with molten wax tinted with oil paint). 11x14-inch original, $275, kariserrao.com.

Fetch this
When treat time rolls around, give your dog one of these yummy bones. They're dipped in a white chocolate-flavoured confection that is safe for dogs. How sweet it is! Dog bones, $7.99, Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory, rockychoc.com.

Makes scents
Dogs will be dogs — and to keep them clean and fresh, they need regular baths. Choose one of these specially formulated shampoos: Shed relief; puppy; 2-in-1; oatmeal; and waterless for in between touch-ups. Essentials Shampoo, $9.99 each, Pet Valu.

Purr-fect
Your cat will love its private wicker digs. Wicker and Faux-Fur Cat Bed, $59.99, HomeSense.

Dog run
The Jogger's Leash is a convenient and comfortable way to take your best friend for a run. It features a flexible and comfortable neoprene waistband. There is a zippered pouch for keys, phone, waste bags and more. $24.99, Canadian Tire.

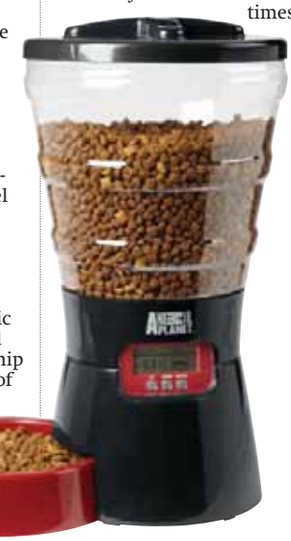
All Canadian dog
There's nothing more Canadian than a dog in a Hotel Doggy Moose sweater. In sizes XS-XL, $14.99, Target Canada.

Catnip fever
Wrap up the Fat Cat Classic Appeteaser, which is filled with high-test organic catnip for hours of fun. Package of two, $4.99, Canadian Tire. Maybe your cat would prefer the Cosmic Pet Corknip Totter Mouse, $8.49, Pet Valu.

Canine stocking
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care — now you can hang up one for your dog, too. Dog Stocking filled with all sorts of treats for your furry friend. $11.99, Pet Valu.

A wild life
Comfortable animal prints dog bed has a removable polyester fleece cover so it's easy to wash. Fits dogs up to 75 pounds. Animal Planet, $29.99, Sears Canada.

Kibble counter
This automatic, battery-operated pet food dispenser has a built-in LCD control panel that lets you customize meal times and portions. Animal Plant, $49.99, Sears Canada.



On Prancer!
Now your pooch can be part of all the reindeer games. Reindeer Sweater, $19.99, Marshalls.

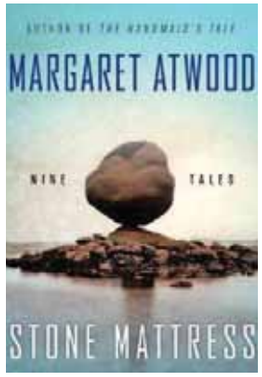
From left to right, ***top row:*** *Ceramic pet bowls $4.99 each, HomeSense; Pet Treat Canisters, HomeSense; Cosmic Pet Corknip Totter Mouse, $8.49, Pet Valu; Specially formulated shampoo, $9.99 each, Pet Valu; Guinea pig costume, $7.99, PetSmart.* ***Middle row:*** *Dog Stocking, $11.99, Pet Valu; Nerf Green Crinkle Football, $9.99, Canadian Tire; Luv-A-Pet, $8.99, PetSmart; Canadian North Fetch hoodie, from $39.99, PetSmart.* ***Bottom row:*** *Wicker and Faux-Fur Cat Bed, $59.99, HomeSense; Dog bones, $7.99, Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory; Pet food dispenser, $49.99, Sears Canada.*

Perfect gifts for a bookworm

Page-turners. See some of the top adult books for 2014 that make for great reads

BILL BEAN
For Metro

Sure, you can give a downloadable gift card, but why not a book? Consider the message it conveys; the identifier as "one who reads"; and the intimacy of touching the pages, each page a revelation.



NON-FICTION

Not That Kind of Girl, Lena Dunham, $32, Random House, hardcover. The creator of the acclaimed HBO series Girls offers a memoir-ish book of essays that is hilarious and poignant.

Thug Kitchen, Thug Kitchen (a.k.a. Michelle Davis and Matt Holloway), $24.99, House of Anansi, hardcover. A vegetable-weighted manifesto for healthy eating that has 100-plus recipes and just as many F-bombs. What would Julia Child say about this one?

This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate, Naomi Klein, $30, Knopf Canada, hardcover. This book will have people talking about the intersection of economic choices and the impact on the environment.

Flash Forward Tenth, The Magenta Foundation, $60, four hard covers in slipcase. A compendium of the last decade of images from emerging photographers.

FICTION

Adult Onset, Anne-Marie MacDonald, $32, Knopf Canada, hardcover. MacDonald's new novel delves into contemporary parenting, where anxious adults prepare for the worst and hope for the best.

Girl Runner, Carrie Snyder, $29.95, House of Anansi, hardcover. The pursuit of one's passion as seen through the life of a 104-year-old Olympian whose body is confined but whose mind runs free.

Stone Mattress: Nine Tales, Margaret Atwood, $29.95, Deckle Edge, hardcover. Canada's signature novelist, essayist and poet releases her first work in eight years, it's an event.

All Saints, K.D. Miller, $19.95, Biblioasis, paperback. Linked short stories reveal the poignant challenges facing the parishioners of a tiny Toronto church.

YOU MIGHT ALSO CONSIDER

Boundless, Kathleen Winter, $29.95, House of Anansi, hardcover. Bestselling author Kathleen Winter gives us a highly personal account of her journey across the Northwest Passage and a revealing look into the reality of the North today.

The Contributors

The "books people" who told Metro their selections.

- The Readers Advisory Committee of the Toronto Public Library; Melissa Bell, associate branch librarian, Richmond Hill Public Library; Michaela Cornell, communications strategist, Kids Can Press; Diana Krawczyk, Reader's Den manager, Mississauga Public Library (and chair of the Ontario Library Association's Readers' Advisory Committee); Cindy Ma, publicist, House of Anansi and Groundwood books; Carrie Snyder, CanLit blogger and author; 2013 Governor General award-winning children's author Teresa Totten; David Worsley, co-owner of independent bookseller Words Worth Books; Nora Young, host/creator of CBC radio's Spark; Josh Ziegler, public relations co-ordinator, Indigo Books; Carrie Dawber, children's librarian, Richmond Hill Public Library; and Melissa Bourdon-Kingof Mabel's Fables Bookstore.

Picks to get kids' eyes off screens, into books

Are you the crazy aunt or uncle stumped over what to delight your nieces and nephews with this season? Here are some top picks for children's books this season.

AGE RANGE: 0-4

Don't. Litsa Trochatos (illustrated by Virginia Johnson), $9.95, Groundwood Books, softcover. Clever picture book about why you don't let a cheetah drive your car, among other funny don'ts.

Sam and Dave Dig a Hole. Mac Barnett (illustrated by Jon Klassen), $16.99, Candlewick Press, hardcover. Two friends, two shovels and a hole that should be big enough for anything.

AGE RANGE: 4-8

The Book with No Pictures. B.J. Novack, $19.99, Dial, hardcover. Super funny: this book will involve adults and children, with laughter as the result.

If I Wrote a Book About You. Stephany Aulenback (illustrated by Denise Holmes), $18.95, Simply Read Books, hardcover. A mother's love for her child is written in the tree branches and the stars. Supersweet storybook to share.

Hana Hashimoto, Sixth Violin, Chieri Uegaki (illustrated by Qin Leng), $16.95, Kids Can Press, hardcover. With only three lessons under her belt, Hana counts on her love of music and her determination to succeed in the school talent show.

AGE RANGE: 9-12

The Boundless. Kenneth Oppel, $19.99, HarperCollins Canada, hardcover. Combine the greatest train ever, a cross-continental trip, nasty villains and treasure.

If: A Mind-bending New Way of Looking at Big Ideas and Numbers. David J. Smith (illustrated by Steve Adams), $19.95, Kids Can Press, hardcover. Making the big concepts accessible to kids and their parents.

BILL BEAN/FOR METRO

Need gift ideas? Zoom in here

MIKE YAWNEY
For Metro

Whether it's through a smartphone or the lens of an expensive camera, there are so many fun ways to capture the moment. Here are some of the best cameras and accessories to put under the tree this year for the shutterbug in your family.

Nikon D750 HD-SLR
$2,549.95 (body only)
It may not be cheap, but Nikon's latest professional camera sure packs a lot of features. The lightweight, carbon fibre D750 houses a newly developed 34.3MP FX-format CMOS sensor, a 51-point autofocus system, and a pivoting viewfinder to let photographers snap photos at any angle. This is also Nikon's first HD-SLR with built-in Wi-Fi for easy photo sharing and remote capture.

Sony Cyber-Shot DSC-RX100
$549.99
Small enough to fit in your pocket, but don't underestimate just how powerful Sony's latest point-and-shoot camera is. Featuring an ultra-bright Carl Zeiss f/1.8 lens, and 20.2-megapixel Exmor CMOS image sensor, shutterbugs can expect razor-sharp images, even in low-light conditions. Face detection registers up to eight faces and with so many built-in, shot-enhancing features, you will always have perfect colour, no matter if you are shooting indoors or at sunset.

Polaroid Socialmatic Camera
$299
A camera for the hipsters. This unique 14MP camera lets you share photos in one of two ways. Built-in Wi-Fi automatically lets you upload pics to popular social media websites, or you can rock it old school by printing them instantly from the camera itself using special ink-free paper. There is also a 2MP rear camera for selfies.

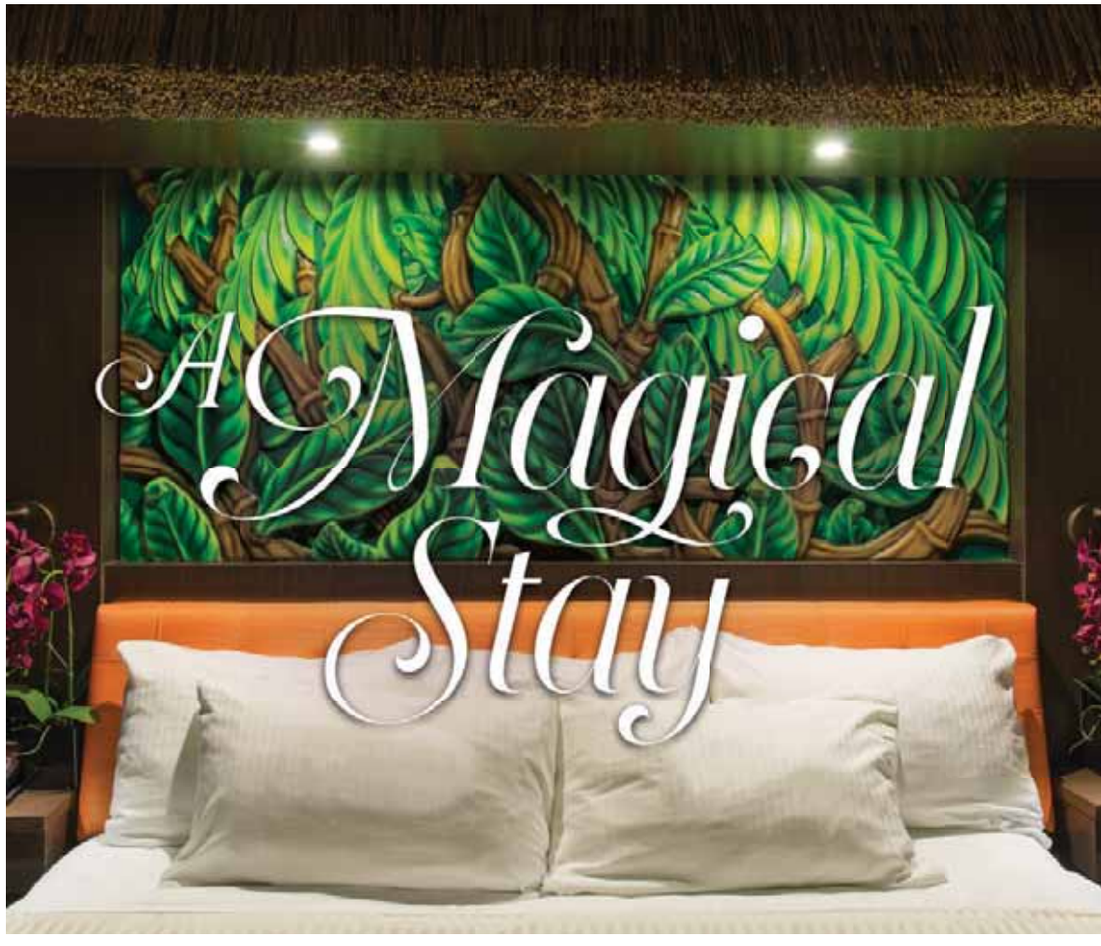
GoPro HERO4 Black
$549.99
A fast new processor allows this updated action cam to shoot 4K video at 30fps and 1080p HD video at 120 fps. The HERO4 Black also features a new Night Photo and Night Lapse mode for customized exposure settings when you want to shoot in low-light conditions. Don't forget the dozens of mounts and cases available to tailor this powerful camera to your needs.

Phantom 2 Vision+
$1,229 US
Take your photography to a new level. This easy-to-fly drone has a built-in camera to snap photos and shoot 1080p HD video while soaring high above the action. Unique stabilizers help reduce wobbly shots while the GPS auto-pilot system offers position holding for stable hovering. Users can download an app to control the camera, and get point-of-view shots directly on their smartphone.

Camalapse 4
$34.99
A rotating stand for your smartphone or compact camera that helps you take high-quality, time-lapse videos like a pro. The twisting stand uses a built-in timer to rotate a full 360 degrees in 60 minutes. Works with small cameras, Android, and iOS devices.

HTC RE
$199
The camera that never turns off. Designed to capture life's impromptu moments, the RE is always on. Simply press a button and you will instantly record 1080p HD video or snap a 16MP photo and stream it to your smartphone. The 146-degree wide angle lens negates the need for a viewfinder, but if you really want one you can use your smartphone as one.

Clockwise from bottom left: Nikon D750 HD-SLR, $2,549.95; Phantom 2 Vision+, $1,229 US; HTC RE, $199; GoPro HERO4 black, $549.99



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Sink your sweet tooth into this...

Chocolate Pudding Cake. This dessert is the ultimate three-in-one

RICARDO COOKS
Chef Ricardo
Ricardo Magazine

This recipe serves 10. COURTESY RICARDOCUISINE.COM

If you're looking to satisfy a voracious sugar craving, don't underestimate the power of a succulent pudding cake. With the richness of a cake plus the decadence of a rich, gooey sauce, this sweet concoction is sure to delight.

Ingredients

Sauce
- 3 cups (720 g) brown sugar
- 3/4 cup (75 g) cocoa powder, sifted
- 2 tsp cornstarch
- 2 1/2 cups (625 ml) water
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) 35% heavy cream
- 1/2 tsp (2.5 ml) vanilla extract

Cake
- 1 cup (250 ml) milk
- 1/2 cup (50 g) cocoa powder, sifted
- 1 1/2 cups (210 g) unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 pinch of salt
- 1/2 cup (115 g) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 1/2 cups (315 g) sugar
- 2 eggs

1. With the rack in the middle position, preheat the oven to 350 F (180 C). Butter a 13 x 9-inch (33 x 23 cm) baking dish.

Sauce

1. In a saucepan over medium heat, combine the brown sugar, cocoa powder and cornstarch. Add the water and cream and bring to a boil, stirring with a whisk. Stir in the vanilla. Set aside.

Cake

1. In saucepan, bring milk and cocoa powder to boil, stirring with a whisk. Let cool.

2. In a bowl, combine the flour, baking soda and salt. Set aside.

3. In another bowl, cream butter and sugar with electric mixer. Add eggs, one at a time, and beat until smooth. At low speed, add dry ingredients alternately with cocoa mix. Spoon batter into prepared dish.

4. Carefully pour hot sauce over batter. Bake 45 minutes or until toothpick inserted in centre of the cake comes out clean. Serve warm or cool.

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Liquid Assets

Middle Earth offerings

LIQUID ASSETS
Peter Rockwell
@therealwineguy
liquidassets@eastlink.ca

Greetings from the middle of Middle Earth.

At the invitation of the wine growers of New Zealand, I've journeyed to the bottom of the planet to get lips-on with the wines, regions and forward-thinking vineyard practices of this country.

Winemakers here love the land, and their sustainability practices monitor, measure and manage their geography to ensure it keeps giving for generations to come. Nearly all the wineries have adopted this philosophy.

Being internationally renowned for Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir has come at a price. With their industry considered a two-trick pony, Kiwi winemakers struggle to get their Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Riesling and red blends to the world.

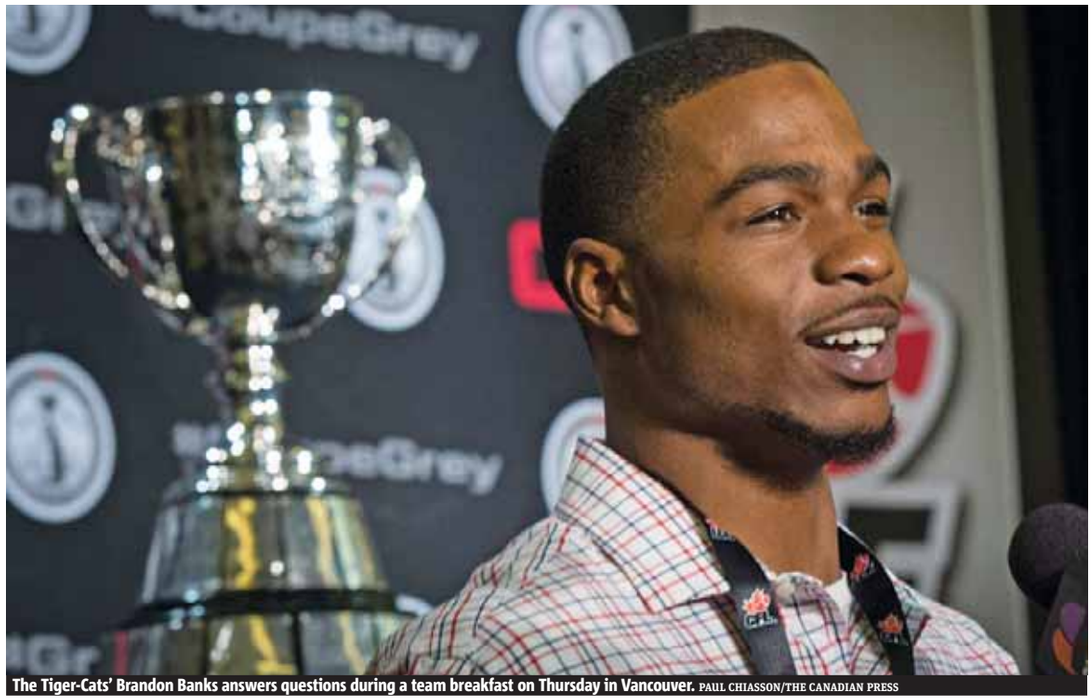
After tasting a few hundred wines, I can say that New Zealand makes a wine for every palate.

A good place to start is Kim Crawford's 2014 Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc ($19.99 to $21.99), a citrus-infused, seafood-friendly white with zippy acidity and lemon/lime zest. **PRICES REFLECT THE RANGE ACROSS THE COUNTRY. SOME PRODUCTS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE IN ALL PROVINCES.**

SPORTS 4

Stamps feel they have horses to slow Banks

Grey Cup. Calgary says it won't change its kick coverage for Hamilton's Speedy-B


The Tiger-Cats' Brandon Banks answers questions during a team breakfast on Thursday in Vancouver. PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

The Calgary Stampeders say Brandon Banks won't be getting any preferential treatment in Sunday's Grey Cup.

Seven days after torching the Montreal Alouettes for 226 punt-return yards and two touchdowns in the CFL's East Division final, the Hamilton Tiger-Cats' speedster will take the field at BC Place Stadium against a Calgary team that isn't planning on changing its kick coverage for one player.

"Play fast, play aggressive, cut him off, make him stop his feet," Stampeders linebacker and special teams ace Karl McCartney said of the keys to stopping Banks. "Obviously he's a speed guy, so once you make him stop his feet, his timing's off and we can catch up.

"But if he's allowed to run he's going to change the angles. The main thing is getting on top and trying to slow him down and trip him up."

Slowing down Banks — nicknamed Speedy-B — was something the Alouettes were unable to accomplish in the East final.

Apart from his two TD returns of 93 and 88 yards, Banks had another 78-yard runback negated by a penalty in Hamilton's 40-24 victory. The 226 yards were a playoff record, while the two punt return scores tied a CFL post-season mark. Despite the gaudy numbers, the Stampeders don't plan on altering their scheme.

"We're going to try and play our game. We feel good about the guys we have covering kicks and the way that we do it," said Calgary special teams co-ordinator Mark Kilam. "Our guys are looking forward to the challenge.

"Brandon Banks is a special player, and not only is he making a lot of plays, the guys that are playing in front of him are doing a great job. We've got to be able to win our 1-on-1s against them and get into position to make a play."

The Stampeders have a core group of veterans on their cover teams, including McCartney and Rob Cote, who have been through the battles and know what to expect on Sunday.

"Those guys have worked hard all year. They're leaders with what they do," said Kilam. "They play their roles very well, they understand their roles and that's why we've been successful."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"You have to get on top, smack him good a couple times. That might slow him down."

Stampeders linebacker Karl McCartney on the Tiger-Cats' Brandon Banks

Running up the yardage

On top of his 226 return yards in the East Division final, Brandon Banks also had three carries for 35 yards and four catches for another 33 yards, totalling 294 yards.

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By the numbers, Calgary wins it

Ticats may surprise.
Stamps have won both games this season, but Hamilton's dual-threat Collaros plays this time

Grey Cup game

Stampeders vs. Ticats, Sunday, 4 p.m. at BC Place (TSN)

For the first time since 2011, the Grey Cup will be a neutral-site game, a factor that gives the Calgary Stampeders a big advantage over the Hamilton Tiger-Cats.

The Stampeders had a CFL-best 8-1 road record en route to a league-leading 15-3 overall mark. The Montreal Alouettes were the lone team to earn a home win over Calgary, claiming a 31-15 decision Sept. 21.

Neither quarterback Bo Levi Mitchell nor CFL rushing leader Jon Cornish played in that contest, but both will suit up Sunday. The Stampeders committed three turnovers, including two by backup Drew Tate (interception, fumble).

Hamilton finished tied with Calgary and Edmonton for the league's best regular-season home record at 7-2, anchored by its stellar 6-0 mark at Tim Hortons Stadium. The Ticats stretched that to seven straight victories with their 40-24 East Division final win Sunday against Montreal.

But the Ticats struggled on the road 2-7. Only expansion Ottawa (0-9) was worse.

Calgary won both regular-season meetings between the division leaders, although only by a combined 13 points. The two teams haven't played since the Stampeders' 30-20 victory Aug. 16.

Hamilton, which finished atop the East Division with a 9-9 record, will get its first look Sunday at a Calgary offence with Cornish in the lineup. He missed both regular-season meetings as injuries limited last year's outstanding player to appearing in nine games.

But the 30-year-old native of New Westminster, B.C., was still the CFL's rushing leader with 1,082 yards, averaging almost eight yards per carry. Edmonton held Cornish to 54 yards rushing on 14 carries in the West Division final Sunday but he still amassed 120 yards and a TD on four catches in Calgary's 43-18 victory.

Despite Cornish's absence, Calgary averaged a CFL-best 144 yards rushing per game.

Hamilton counters with a league-low 76.8 yards allowed on the ground in each contest.

Trouble is, Calgary does more than just run well offensively.

The Stampeders led the CFL in scoring (28.4 points per game), touchdowns (52), rushing TDs (25), surrendered a league-low 26 sacks and were the league's least penalized squad. Calgary also committed the fewest turnovers (29).

Calgary's defence will first meet Hamilton quarterback Zach Collaros. He missed both regular-season meetings with concussion-like symptoms. The Ticats were 1-4 without him.

Collaros, also in his first season as a CFL starter, is an accurate passer (65.8 per cent) who had more TDs (15) than interceptions (nine). But he's also a dual threat, having rushed for 328 yards (5.8-yard average).

Hamilton's main rushing threat is running back Nic Grigsby. The former Winnipeg Blue Bomber ran for 93 yards and two TDs against Montreal last weekend.

Hamilton last won the Grey Cup in '99, ironically beating Calgary at B.C. Place Stadium. It's their second straight appearance in the CFL's biggest game after losing last year in Regina to Saskatchewan.

Calgary is chasing its second CFL title since head coach John Hufnagel took over in 2008. They also reached the 2012 Grey Cup, losing to Toronto at Rogers Centre.

Calgary has been the class of the CFL since Hufnagel's arrival, compiling an impressive 89-36-1 regular-season record, but just the one title over that span.

Hufnagel said that Calgary's mantra this season has been about finishing the job.

It's difficult to see the Stampeders not doing that on Sunday.

Pick - Calgary.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

PHOTO: STAMPEDERS PUNTER ROB MAVER/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Delvin Breaux, a six-foot-one 196-pounder, is a key member of the Ticats' defence, usually tasked with shutting down star receivers. CLAUS ANDERSEN/GETTY IMAGES

Every down a gift for Ticats' Breaux

CFL. Hamilton cornerback's recovery from broken neck an inspirational story

Every once in a while, Delvin Breaux walks out of a store only to be stopped when the anti-theft detection system goes off.

The Hamilton Tiger-Cat defensive back always has the required receipt. But he also walks around with a tangle of metal screws, rods and plates after breaking his neck in 2006 playing high school football in Louisiana.

Breaux is more than the Ticats' shutdown corner. He is a study in courage and perseverance.

"Great player. Better man," said Hamilton special teams and linebackers coach Jeff Reinebold.

A highly recruited 17-year-old, Breaux was headed for NCAA glory when his life slid off the rails in a game between his McDonogh 35 High School and Jesuit High in New Orleans. Racing down the left sideline on special teams, Breaux angled towards the kick returner and, cutting round the corner of the five-man wall, launched himself at the ball-carrier like an Exocet missile.

Later at the hospital, he was told he had broken his C4, C5, C6 vertebrae and an artery had been partially blocked by a chopped bone. His doctor told him he should be dead.

Eight years later, the 25-year-old Breaux is a CFL East all-star in his second year in the league. On Sunday, he has a second shot at the Grey Cup.

"I'm thankful just for the opportunity to be here," he said Thursday. "And to be alive."

Breaux knows his story is inspiring, and he's willing to share it. But his preference is not to dwell on the past.

One tough Ticat

"I don't like to be reminded of what happened, because I could have been dead."

Ticats cornerback Delvin Breaux, who suffered a horrific neck injury as a high schooler

His journey back was long and hard. The injury cost him his football career at LSU, one of a plethora of top schools to offer him a scholarship, and sent him to some dark places.

"The moments when I didn't have anywhere to go. The moments when I could see myself not being the person I wanted to be," he recalled.

Breaux says his neck is 100 per cent these days, although he works hard at maintaining the strength in that area.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Trans-Canada trash talk

METRO TICATS VS. METRO STAMPS

COLIN MCNEIL
Metro in Toronto

This Sunday, the boys from Steeltown take on Team My Little Pony for the Earl Grey's big silver saucer.

Oh, sorry, the "Stampeders."

The players in red and black (not to be confused with those expansion imposters, the Redblacks) hail from an oily, sandy city that somehow thought "Cowtown" was a flattering nickname. It's a place where they measure the size of your hat in gallons, and once a year everyone dresses up like Marty McFly from the third Back to the Future movie.

Calgary is known for *not* having the biggest mall in North America and that animal riding … thingy. I'm sure you get used to the smell of horse manure eventually.

Hamilton, on the other hand, literally invented Tim Hortons, and is home to the CFL Hall of Fame. We've got Eugene Levy and Martin Short — you've got Alison Redford. Get on our level.

So the Stamps have the best record in the CFL. Holy Mackinaw. Oskeewhoop-deefreakin-do. You know what we have? Momentum. Like the raging fires of a Hamilton steel mill, the Ticats are red hot right now. We're stoked to get another shot at the cup after last year, and I'd bet money in the (Brandon) Banks that the Cats take Jon Cornish and the rest of the hens, and eat 'em raw.

COLIN MCNEIL IS METRO NEWS CANADA'S EVENING WEB EDITOR AND A PROUD HAMILTONIAN

JEREMY NOLAIS
Metro in Calgary

Before we get down to business, I just have to ask one question — what exactly is a Tiger-Cat?

I'm pretty sure that's not even a real thing, maybe some legendary creature on par with a Lizardman or Yeti.

I guess we shouldn't expect much more from a city boasting claims to fame like the 25-cent Timbit and being in close proximity to Toronto. Oh right, you produce steel and have a couple waterfalls, I'm sure the tourists are just pouring in for a closer look.

See, the things I like about Calgary are we actually had a working stadium ready at the start of the season, we had some worthy teams to compete against in our division and our quarterback is playing un-BOlievably well.

I was reading that your new mayor hedged a tad on taking a bet from ours — sounds like a smart man. Sunday's game will be over in seconds, your Tabbies' roars will be reduced to purrs after a few 40-yard runs straight through that poor excuse of a defence courtesy of Jon Cornish.

It's going to be a long — and I mean — long flight home Monday morning.

JEREMY NOLAIS IS A METRO REPORTER BASED IN CALGARY, WHERE HE'S LIVED SINCE HE WAS SEVEN

Travel. Stamps fans descend on Vancouver

YASMIN JASWAL
For Metro

Stampeders fans are hoping to see their team lift the Grey Cup for the first time since 2008. THE CANADIAN PRESS

It's been six years since the Calgary Stampeders brought the Grey Cup home, but some fans are so sure the cup will come home this year that they're on their way to Vancouver to watch it happen live.

Sarah Weatherdon, a stay-at-home mom and co-owner of a recruiting company, was due to fly into Vancouver Thursday night and was looking forward to a weekend of fun, capped off by what she said will surely be a Stamps win.

Weatherdon has never been to a Grey Cup. She had tickets to the 2009 edition in Calgary but sold them once the Saskatchewan Roughriders cemented their spot in the game as the West Division representative.

"I bought my tickets this time about three weeks ago," she said. "I just had a feeling they were going to be in it."

And she's not the only one. Brad Greenslade has been attending the CFL final for 20 consecutive years with the Grey Cup Committee, a volunteer organization that started in Calgary in 1948. He said Thursday that he'd already seen a large number of Stamps fans walking the streets of Vancouver.

"More than ever. That's probably the largest contingent out here," Greenslade said. "A lot of people have come from Calgary to cheer on our fabulous team."

Greenslade also believes that the Stamps are going to finish off the season carrying the cup home.

"The Stamps will win, and it will be 36-18," he said.

WITH FILES FROM JEREMY NOLAIS

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Baertschi now trade bait after losing goal-den touch

THE HOCKEY NEWS
Brian Costello
calgary@metronews.ca

Long lost are the days when Sven Baertschi looked toward the blue paint and saw nothing but net. Now all he sees is polyester nylon, fiberglass cage and Kapok. In short, he sees nothing but goalie.

To say Baertschi is in a scoring slump is an understatement. No goals in 21 games this season (10 in the American Hockey League, 11 in the NHL). We're coming up on eight months since Sven last scored a goal, which was late in the 2013-14 AHL season for the Abbotsford Heat. Just three years ago, everything Sven touched turned to goal.

He averaged an amazing two points per game for the Western Hockey League's Portland Winter Hawks (33 goals and 94 points in 47 games) and had three goals in that five-game emergency call-up to the NHL. He was on a fast track to a top-six job in the Calgary forward ranks. When the Flames were getting stripped down to the joists, he was as the projected saviour in waiting.

Flames forward Sven Baertschi
GETTY IMAGES

Somewhere along the way, confidence was lost. Maybe it was interim-GM Brian Burke's public spanking last September that took the glint off the shine. Maybe it was just an eventuality that his one-way craftiness wasn't going to cut it in the NHL.

Whatever is was, Baertschi, 22, is at a crossroads in his pro hockey career. He badly yearns to become a contributor at the NHL level and you can see he's gripping the stick tight enough to produce maple syrup. But he won't get top-six time until he starts showing he's worthy of those 18 minutes. And he's not likely to produce when he's an eight-minute man on the fourth line.

So what to do with Baertschi now? Mason Raymond and Joe Colborne are returning soon, which means Corban Knight and either Sven or Michael Ferland are AHL-bound. Ferland has the body type and plays a style that appeals to upper management. Sven gets overpowered along the walls and in the corners. And we know Sven doesn't do well with demotion. When he was dispatched to Abbotsford last year, he responded with an uninspired two goals and four points in his first 15 AHL games. Then he had just the three assists in 10 AHL games this year after his disappointing demotion.

My guess is Baertschi is trade bait. The only question is how many dimes the Flames get back on their dollar.

Stats study

Who are Calgary's top players in Corsi close percentage (generating shots on net versus shots on net for both teams)?

1. Sven Baertschi, 52.9%
2. Sean Monahan, 49.4%
3. Paul Byron, 48.5%
4. Mark Giordano, 48.2%
5. Matt Stajan, 47.9%

NFL

Johnson boosts ailing Detroit offence

Calvin Johnson's big day was exactly what Detroit's dormant offence needed. Johnson caught 11 passes for 146 yards with a pair of first-half touchdowns, and the Lions boosted their post-season hopes with a 34-17 victory over the Chicago Bears on Thursday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NFL

McCoy runs for 159 yards as Eagles soar over Dallas

LeSean McCoy ran for 159 yards a touchdown, Mark Sanchez had his first scoring run in almost three years and the Philadelphia Eagles beat the Dallas Cowboys 33-10 in a Thanksgiving battle of NFC East co-leaders Thursday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

Forsberg strike deepens woes for struggling Oilers

Filip Forsberg scored at 3:55 of overtime to give the Nashville Predators a 1-0 victory over Edmonton on Thursday night, handing the Oilers their eighth consecutive defeat.

Pekka Rinne made 37 saves for the Predators, who have won three straight. He stopped Jordan Eberle on a penalty shot early in overtime.

Viktor Fasth had 24 saves for Edmonton, which fell to 0-11-2 against Western Conference teams, however, Forsberg spun to free himself from a defender and beat Fasth with a wrist shot from the left circle.

Oilers forward Matt Hendricks was injured at 2:12 of the first period when he blocked a shot. Hendricks, a former Predator, hobbled back to the Edmonton bench and on to the dressing room. The Oilers said he would not return to the game due to injury.

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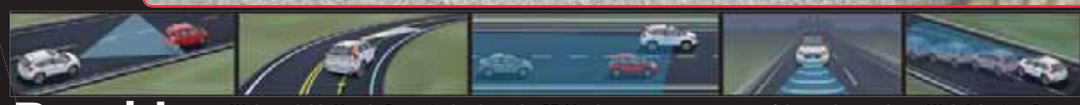

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AUGMENTED REALITY

Stuck on 12 Across? Scan this image with your Metro News app for today's crossword and Sudoku answers. It's OK. No one's watching.

metro AR

→ See the full instructions on Metro's Voices page.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
You have been known to jump to conclusions and according to the planets you made a value judgment recently that you can now see was totally wrong.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
The planets warn you cannot afford to give anyone the benefit of the doubt where financial matters are concerned. Demand evidence before parting with your cash!

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
When you want something enough you let nothing stand in your way, which is good. What is not so good is if you climb over other people to get it. Be more diplomatic.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Just because one thing you tried went wrong does not mean you are a failure and anyone who says you are is not a friend and must be cut out of your life right away.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
If a friend asks you to do something unethical, refuse — even if you owe them a favour. The best favour you can do them is pointing out why they need to rethink their attitude.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Today's cosmic influences will offer you the chance to break the deadlock in a long dispute. Can you go forward together?

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Someone will say something today that is flattering, but don't let it go to your head. If you allow your pride to grow it may get in the way of seeing what still needs to be done.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
As Mercury moves into the money area of your chart you're free to make changes to your financial situation. Take others' needs into account but your own needs must come first.

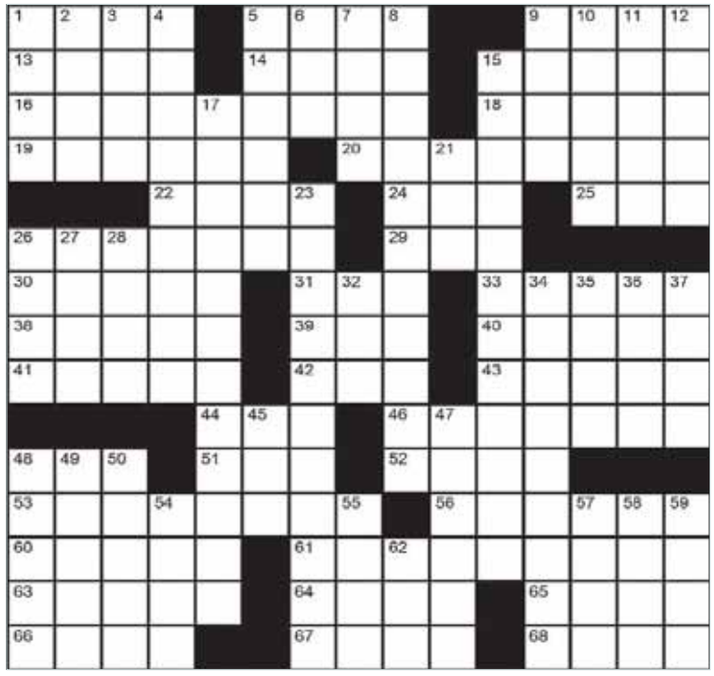
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
There are things in your world that have become predictable and need shaking up. The entry of Mercury into your sign today will encourage you to begin new habits and routines.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
A parting of ways may be necessary but it does not have to be painful. The simple fact is you have moved on and so have they, but in different directions. That's OK.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
There is no point dwelling on events you can't change. Focus on what might be rather than on what has been.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
What happens today will give you the sense of perspective you have been lacking. You may have to admit that a wrong turn has been taken. It's no big deal.

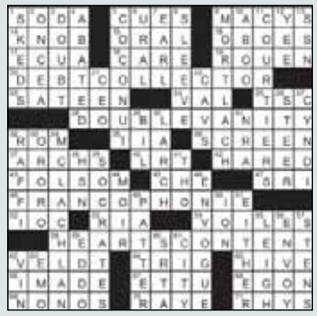
Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



Across
1. Document to fill out
5. Bass or Treble
9. Honey drink
13. Camaro model, __-Z
14. Try, in court
15. Hogwash; or, ship part
16. Romantic comedy, for example: 2 wds.
18. Town in western Saskatchewan
19. Declare as truth
20. Ottawa sports team
22. Royal Canadian Mint creation
24. "Everything __" by Bush
25. Opposite of Yes, in Galloway
26. Surname of the Canadian doctor born in Gravenhurst, ON in 1890
29. Wane
30. Take _ __ of faith
31. Mess up
33. Have _ __-jerk reaction
38. 'Ancient'-meaning prefix
39. November 28th, 1962 for satirist Jon Stewart [acronym]
40. Collect
41. Ledge-for-literature
42. Mr. Diamond Phillips
43. Quit
44. "Sprechen __ Deutsch?"
46. Brings back employees
48. "__ So Shy" by The Pointer Sisters
51. Long list ender
52. Flatbread variety
53. Oscar-winning actress Ms. Spencer's
56. PetSmart purchase
60. Chalk-user's need
61. Partially-country
63. Bird's prey clasper
64. MBA subject
65. Hats holder
66. 1979 Madness album: 'One __ Beyond...'
67. RR depots
68. The Bee __

Down
1. Soccer org.
2. Shakespeare: "Deny thy father and refuse thy name; __, __ thou wilt not..." - Juliet
3. Massage for therapy
4. __ Canadian Art Collection (Featuring works by #17-Down)
5. Path: French
6. Winnipeg-born actor Mr. Cariou
7. Listeners
8. Glaciated grub glaze: 2 wds.
9. Light rain
10. Pianist/singer Mr. John
11. Ancient marketplace
12. Thick forest's characteristic
15. Retro furniture piece: 2 wds.
17. Celebrated creative Canuck collective: 3 wds.
21. Bird beak
23. Etuis: 2 wds.
26. Some bread rolls
27. "In the Valley of __" (2007)
28. Prefix to 'phone'
32. Oz jumper
34. Ontario village where #4-Down is located
35. Close
36. Convenience
37. Chemical suffixes
45. "Lord, is __ _?" (Last Supper question)
47. Thomas __, American portrait artist (b.1844 - d.1916)
48. Party givers
49. Acclaim
50. Like unfresh bread
54. On
55. Breakaway group
57. Hillside
58. Hand-crafted Irish souvenir
59. Caribou cousins
62. Bus. day

Yesterday's Crossword

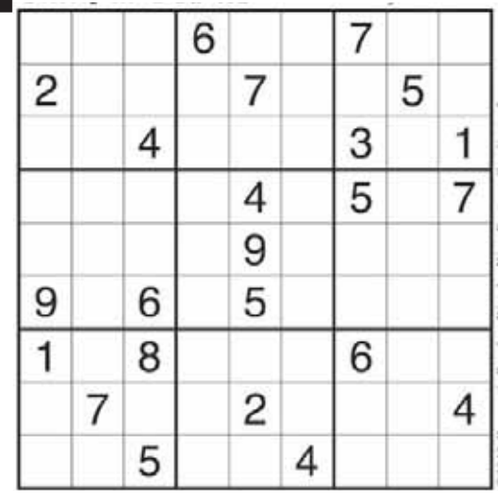


Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.



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Yesterday's Sudoku

1	6	5	2	4	7	3	9	8
9	4	7	3	6	8	1	5	2
8	3	2	5	1	9	4	6	7
2	5	4	9	3	6	8	7	1
7	8	9	4	5	1	2	3	6
6	1	3	8	7	2	9	4	5
3	7	1	6	8	4	5	2	9
4	2	6	1	9	5	7	8	3
5	9	8	7	2	3	6	1	4

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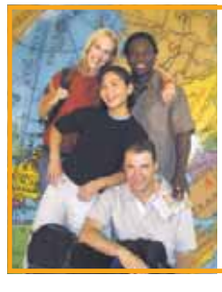

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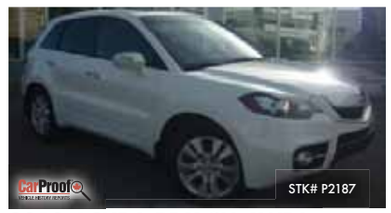

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